

A NEW MODEL FOR A DECLINING CITY CHURCH
BASED ON A THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING
OF HOPE

A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
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May 1978

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	viii
CHAPTER	
I. THE PROBLEMS OF THE DECLINING CITY CHURCH	1
Physical Deterioration.....	2
Negative Mental Attitudes.....	6
Loss of Sense of Mission.....	9
Conclusion.....	12
II. A CASE STUDY OF A DECLINING CITY CHURCH..	13
Purpose.....	13
Background.....	17
Depth Interviews of Members.....	33
Conclusion.....	41
III. A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT OF HOPE.....	42
Introduction.....	43
The Source of Hope.....	44
The Cross and Resurrection.....	45
The Nature of Hope.....	57
Reasons to Hope.....	61
Conclusion.....	63
IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	65
Keen Intellectual Challenge.....	66
Personal Experience.....	71
Personal Commitment.....	73
Fellowship Support.....	77
Organizational Structures.....	79
Styles of Leadership.....	81
Spiritual Base.....	82
Conclusion.....	83

BIBLIOGRAPHY	85
APPENDIX A	87
APPENDIX B	101

ABSTRACT

The Problem: What would be necessary for the declining city church to become an effective witness to a Christian valuing of life in a city? What is the single most important factor which must change so that such a church can develop into a positive influence for its area and its own members? Are there any viable alternatives to moving out of the city location which so desperately needs to turn from destruction of persons and their faith?

Background: The majority of Americans are living in some two hundred metropolitan centers. In the center of these there exist numerous churches which once were large and strong but which have been declining for years losing hope in the future, in themselves and sometimes even in God. This is only partially due to geographical and demographical changes. It is more fundamentally influenced by the members' understanding of hope. When hope is understood culturally, declining numbers of members, increasing deterioration of large buildings, rising financial costs, declining neighborhoods all tend to bring hopelessness. Many ministers of city churches

have left those churches primarily as a result of these culturally determined signs of "failure".

Method: The Case Study Method is used focusing on the Hollywood Congregational Church, Hollywood, California where I have been the Senior Minister for the past six years. The lack of a theological understanding of hope is identified as a basic factor negatively affecting the members' attitudes and actions. Even though the need for change within the church programs is recognized, the emotional ability to accept, encourage and support change is extremely difficult, especially if one questions the eventual survival of the institution as a whole and one's self in particular.

Theological Position: Through a new theological understanding of hope, based on Moltmann's Theology of Hope and The Crucified God, it is possible to develop a new model for the declining city church which is open to change. There is no need to be afraid of the future whether the church be increasing or declining. These changes need not influence the personal faith of the members in either God or the future of the church (whether at its present location or in another). Their hope becomes grounded in the eternal nature and trustworthiness of God rather than in the visible, culturally defined signs of

success and/or failure. This applies to individuals as they see these signs in their own life as well as in the church (e.g. when we are young and healthy we are filled with "hope" for the future - when older and unsure of our health we tend to lose this temporary optimism and confidence in the future).

Implications: By redefining history along the lines suggested by Moltmann, and by focusing on a future promised by the God revealed to us through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ as well as through the fulfillment of the Old Testament and within our own experience, it becomes possible to identify specific factors which are essential to a new model for a declining city church. These include keen intellectual challenge, personal experiences of hope, opportunities to make personal commitment to God, support of fellow-believers, new organizational structures which are more flexible and leadership styles which are more relational and above all and within all a strong spiritual and Christian base upon which to build anew.

INTRODUCTION

There is an urgent need for members of declining city churches to renew their hope in God, in themselves and in the future.

For the past six years I have been the minister of a declining city church. In seeking to bring renewal to this church we have wrestled with the serious problems of deteriorating property and increased financial needs, declining membership and increasing age of members, changing neighborhood and the moving away of key young families, increasing crime and decreasing hope.

As the minister I have experienced times of great loneliness and guilt thinking that it must be my fault that the church is declining and not attracting new members, funds, etc. But for the last 25 years the church has been declining and only one minister has stayed for more than four years and he concluded on a parttime basis and leaving the parish ministry for another vocational field.

Then I considered the possibility that perhaps it was not the minister that was responsible for the decline but rather the congregation. However there were still many deep spirited persons attending and praying and working for the church and when I looked carefully at other city churches I discovered that our pattern of decline was quite ordinary, predictable and indeed widespread experience of most city churches in America today.

I read and reviewed the clearly written book What's Ahead for 'Old First Church' by Ezra Jones and Robert Wilson¹ which pointed out starkly that there is a point of "no-return" when the lack of volunteer members from the suburbs, the lack of finances with which to maintain the large, beautiful old buildings, the loss of members moving out of the city and the presence of apartment dwellers who are basically non-attending, etc. make it untenable for a city church to continue to support itself and its ministry. I reviewed the book for our boards and committees. One of our Trustees did a straight line graph of our finances which showed the actual number of years that the church could continue to operate at our present rate of operating budget deficit and annual required expenditure on building

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Ezra Earl Jones, Robert Wilson, What's Ahead for Old First Church, (New York: Harper & Row), 1974.

repairs. We clearly met or went well beyond all the criteria for having passed the point of "no-return" established by Jones and Wilson.

This did wonders for our enthusiasm and deepened our sense of failure and hopelessness. Each time we suggested a new program or a few new members joined it was not enough to stem the tide of pessimism and the heavy visible cloud of impending doom. My own optimism and energy and faith were not enough to overcome these empirical signs of decline and failure. These were also compounded by the fact that there was still not a clearly defined and accepted understanding of, nor commitment to, any particular purpose or mission for which the church stood apart from tending to the traditional needs of the traditional members for security and comfort in traditional ways. Many persons had served the church long and loyally on many boards and committees some 30-40 even more than 50 years and now felt it was time to pass it on to others who would carry on the traditional programs and decisions which they could understand and accept. Most of their sons and daughters were now grown and moved away from the city and the church in the city.

Traditionally churches in America have used culturally determined criteria by which to measure their

success or failure (e.g. increasing membership, additional buildings, larger budgets etc.). Unfortunately, their feeling of closeness to God and hope for themselves and for the future became closely identified with these cultural signs of success or failure. When things were going well, members were filled with faith, hope and enthusiasm. They felt close to God and the recipients of His blessings. When these signs of success were absent, they experienced a loss of faith, hope and a feeling of alienation from God. They began to give up on themselves, their church and God. Their loss of hope for the future was reflected in loss of energy, purpose and expressions of faith in the present.

In seeking some way to survive spiritually and to minister effectively with this declining city church, I found myself dealing more and more with the problem of hope - both emotionally and theologically. Few constructive decisions are possible so long as persons believe that a situation is hopeless. Few alternatives are suggested unless persons are liberated from the past and open to risking for the future. How can we perceive and believe that God is able to do "new things" upon the face of the earth - not just outside the crowded and lonely city but also within them? How can we believe that it is possible for us to regain the hope which set the early church on fire and brought new life into those personal lives, and

their churches and was a saving influence in their cities? Is it essential that our entire city church organizational structure must be discarded before new, effective forms of the church can emerge in the city? Few such "experimental" city churches endure more than just a few years. How can God use the many already existing parish structures to meet the changing, crying needs of the city? What is there to hope for that the city church may renew its witness to persons influenced by what is written, published, recorded, broadcast and decided in the cities? What will bring HOPE back to the people of God and their ministers making possible a new model for the declining city churches of America?

It is the purpose of this professional project to clarify the problems of a declining city church by doing a case study of the city church which I have been serving and then to develop a new model for it based upon a radically different theological understanding of hope. This is drawn from Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope as expressed primarily in his Theology of Hope² and The Crucified God³ but

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Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

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Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

drawing also from his other works and from my experience with him in person September 1976 at a workshop on "Human Liberation and the Gospel". I shall not deal with all aspects of Moltmann's theology of hope but with those which have given me a new theological understanding of hope as it makes possible a radically different approach to, and within a declining city church. It is not the purpose of this project to develop a whole new organizational structure for a city church but rather to identify the need for and the existence of a new theological understanding of hope and to point toward some specific implications which such a new understanding might have on a declining city church.

It is further hoped that the results of this project may be of practical value to other ministers and lay persons who are spending their lives seeking to apply valid theological understandings and personal convictions to the serious problems faced by declining city churches.

Chapter I

THE PROBLEMS OF THE DECLINING CITY CHURCH

The problems of the city church are not only the result of dramatic changes in the physical environment, they are also the result of many years of teaching within the church that God is to be found in "the beauty of the earth, in the skies and seas... His hands these wonders hath wrought." Often it is that I find God in the majesty of the mountains or plains. Yet I never learned that He was equally to be found in the big cities where men and machines make the tall buildings and police sirens pierce the relative noises of the traffic every night. The God of the country beckons as does the openness of the land, the relative safety of the quiet neighborhoods which have been chosen as desirable places to relocate by families and businesses alike. They come into the city only when necessary for a particular function or to make their wages only to flee from the city at the earliest possible moment and avoid the violence and noise, the filth and corruption for which our cities are known. Not only families and

businesses but also many churches have left the cities of our land. They want to be where their people are and they do not want to be where the needs are so great that it places them and their people in danger.

PHYSICAL DETERIORATION

Persons who remain in the city often do so not because they like it but because they have not been able to make any other choice, perhaps because their economic situation does not permit it, or they want to be close to their friends, etc. Cities become places filled with older persons, single adults starting out on their professional lives, persons who are unable to afford to live any other place. Neighborhoods often change radically in a short period of time from attractive single family residential areas to duplexes, multiple dwellings, commercial businesses and office buildings. Rarely is land set aside for parks or beautification. Rarely is anyone concerned enough about the direction that a neighborhood is going to get involved to improve it. Instead it is more common to give up on the area and move away from it. Some real estate persons make their money by watching areas that are deteriorating and taking advantage of the situation offering ridiculously low compensation for homes which may be the only financial security for an older person. The funds

received when they sell are often not enough to purchase a similar house in another neighborhood.

The urgent need to serve the persons living and working in the cities continues but members of the churches in the city are often feeling defeated and discouraged as their resources have more and more demands made upon them and as their membership continues to decline.

The fact remains that in our cities there are many churches which were once over 1,000 in membership but which have declined to around 200 or less. They were once located in fashionable business or single family dwelling areas where their children and young people could ride their bicycles or walk to the church after school and in the evenings. Life in the community often centered around these neighborhood churches. Community leaders were often members of a leading church in town and knew one another well. Today these neighborhoods have changed dramatically and community leaders often hardly know one another. Single family homes have been torn down to make room for large apartment complexes. The large buildings of the church once so full of activities every day and every night often stand unused and in need of costly repairs to be kept in safe condition.

The movement to the suburbs began in the late 1940's and accelerated during the 1950's and 60's. It continues even today. When families are able to afford it economically, they move out of the city seeking a better environment. Persons commute to their offices in the city during the week and stay in the suburbs or travel even farther away from the city on weekends.

Those persons moving into the city apartments were largely not interested in attending a traditional family-oriented church because a) they were usually not in the city on weekends, or b) they did not want to have the church judge their particular life-style, or c) they were not part of a traditional family unit themselves and so would feel somewhat out-of-place in the church. In addition the loyal members who did stay in the city sought to continue their traditional ways of meeting the needs as they were decades earlier when the neighborhood was different. These traditional ways do not often meet the contemporary needs of those now living in the apartments in the areas around the city church. Nor has the city church changed its approach to successfully relate to the apartment dwellers nor to the business community which now make up the majority of the population in the immediate area of the church.

Financially the declining city church may be fortunate to have endowment funds - especially if they are located in a part of our country where leaving large bequests to the church has been practiced for centuries (e.g. New England). However many city churches have to rely more heavily upon the income pledged by their members, or generated from their activities during the year even when they have a modest income from the interest from some endowment funds. The familiar pattern in such cases is that as the large buildings require major repairs in order to be maintained in safe and/or attractive condition, increasingly the capital funds have to be expended to make repairs. In addition the annual operating costs continue to increase to the point where major cutbacks have to be made, usually in the areas of leadership and program.

Some city churches have chosen to sell and move before all their funds were depleted by building repairs and operating expenses. Dr. Erwin Britton, Executive Secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches and long time pastor of old First Congregational Church, Detroit, Michigan has said that if a church is to keep up with the mobility of its members it must move every twenty-five years. Some churches have chosen to do this. Other churches have chosen to merge with another declining city church nearby and have thereby

prolonged the life of both for perhaps 10-15 years but accomplishing little to change the downward direction of both churches since the decline of the area is usually determined by forces outside the church often economic or cultural ones.¹

National denominations have, in some cases, kept a city church going by underwriting part of their financial costs. Other city churches have been deemed not worth such costs and have been closed and sold by their denominations. The lack of financial resources has often accentuated the feeling of hopelessness and futility on the part of both ministers and members in churches which have been steadily declining in the city while the neighborhood changes around them increasing the physical needs while decreasing the financial and human resources with which to meet those needs.

NEGATIVE MENTAL ATTITUDES

These empirical signs of decline, visible in the neighborhood, on their own buildings, in their membership and in their financial position also have a discouraging

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Ezra Earl Jones, Robert Wilson, What's Ahead for 'Old First Church', (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 46-48.

effect upon the mental and psychological attitude of church members toward themselves and toward others. Attendance on Sunday mornings is no longer filling the pews but in their place are many empty pews and members begin to sense something is wrong - we are not meeting the cultural signs of success which says our pews should be full. Already they may have taken out some of the pews or even rearranged the entire sanctuary so that it doesn't look so empty and discouraging. No longer are there two services on Sunday mornings and meetings in the evenings are discontinued since members may not be safe going to and from the church after dark. Once the city church was the place to make contacts with other business associates and to exchange views on the community development. Now there are few men left who live and work in the city and attend a declining city church. Each year the budget of the church is brought before the members and they are faced again and again with the need for additional funds and the necessity of taking more money from their dwindling capital reserves.

These factors have a definite and negative effect upon the attitude of the members. They begin to be unhappy with themselves and express it in unhappiness toward others. They spend more and more time talking about the "good old days" and holding them up as ideals against which they measure their current church and personal situation.

They often search for persons upon whom to place the responsibility for failure and usually the minister is the most visible candidate. They bemoan the loss of prestige in the community and hang on as long as they possibly can to the image that they are most certainly one of THE leading churches in their town - which at one time they most certainly were. They spend so much time looking backward that they choose not to look into the present nor toward the future to consider and to be willing to change. They seem to think that reconstructing the past is the action that their church ought to take in the present if there is to be any future for it.

However there comes a point when the more conscientious individuals may begin to deprecate themselves since they see themselves as also being part of the declining (perhaps because of a problem with their own health, perhaps because of the advancement of their age, perhaps because of a limitation of finances, etc.). As a result of all this they begin to see themselves as not worth the time or attention which the church is spending on them. "The minister should spend his time with the youth because that is where the future of the church is," they say. What they don't say but is equally clearly implied, "But not with us older folk because we're already set in our ways and are not worth his time or trouble". Some have forgotten how to

rejoice and celebrate because they have gotten so used to having things going wrong that they don't know how to react when something goes right such as an unexpected bequest which comes to the church just in time to cover the budget deficit for a whole year.

Visitors to the church find it difficult to catch any sense of excitement and joy or anticipation and love. Members tend to talk in pessimistic terms rather than in hopeful ones. There is little desire to risk and an increasing tendency to hang onto the status quo. The level of interpersonal trust and confidence begins to wane and suspicions begin to surface between longtime friends.

The problems of the declining city church are at heart not just related to the physical deterioration of the area or of their own buildings or financial picture. They go much deeper into the theological understandings of the members. Fundamentally it is the loss of hope in God, in themselves and in one another.

LOSS OF SENSE OF MISSION

When their church was growing successfully the members were convinced they were doing God's will and that His hand was guiding them. They shared a belief and a

feeling that God was with them and blessing their efforts in the church. Now that the church is declining, they somehow feel that there is not the same assurance that God is with them, in fact it is just the opposite. God was with them in success but He is not with them in failure. The members drift in purpose and are confused in just what they should be doing (beyond perpetuating the traditions they used to find so meaningful). They often personally find the passing years in their own lives have brought unavoidable limitations of health, or the loss of a loved one upon whom they depended heavily changes the social circles they feel comfortable to be in. Many see themselves and their earthly vessels as declining just as the church and the neighborhood is deteriorating and they begin to feel a sense of impending doom, or hopelessness, or separation, even alienation from God, which the declining city church and its ministers are not yet prepared to change. We have often tried to deal with the external signs of decline, like putting on a bandage to cover up the wound rather than seeking to understand its essential nature and curing the root of the problem. We must do more than that and soon for people and churches are giving up on the cities and leaving them "to the evils we deplore".

The cities of America are a vast, fast, powerful mission field largely unaffected by the contemporary

Christian Church. Before the turn of the century over 80% of the population of this country will be living in some 200 metropolitan cities. Most of our mass media, governmental decisions, educational policies, publications, financial institutions, business decisions, judicial, legislative and political decisions are all made in our cities. If churches continue to leave the cities or if the members in them continue to lose hope in God, in themselves, in the future we can expect the dignity and worth of individuals to decline at an ever faster rate. The destiny of persons for whom Christ died is at stake and if churches do not regain their rightful role in proclaiming, evidencing and experiencing the Good News and the Hope for the world we can expect God to find some other channel for His redemptive expression of hope.

If, on the other hand, there were some way that hope could be reborn in these declining city churches, if members could catch even the slightest glimpse of the truth that God is still with them and that He is a God of the future even as He is the God of the past; if they could catch a vision that we are a part of the process of God's revelation and as such are the chosen ones just as much as anyone else no matter whether they live in a declining city or in an expensive suburb, if we can grasp the truth of a deeper theological understanding of hope so that no matter

what our present condition, we come to believe and to experience God creating new things upon the face of the earth - not just in the countryside but also - perhaps even especially - in the heart of our cities; then will be heard the cry of freedom and liberation from our cultural fears and self-centered concerns of failure and we shall once more be able to be "The Lord's Free People" in the once declining city churches of America.

CONCLUSION

The problems of the declining city churches are real, they are complicated and cannot be overcome without some major new element entering the situation. A new theological understanding of hope can be that element making possible a new model for a declining city church and its members.

Chapter II

A CASE STUDY OF A DECLINING CITY CHURCH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and document specific factors which relate the history of a declining city church to the rise and fall of hope in its members. Factors which will be taken into consideration will include particular historical events which had an influence on hope, the growth and decline of membership, finances as reflected in the Annual Reports of the congregation, specific fundraising and building drives which showed heightened confidence in the future of the church and increased hope in the future, the growth and rapid change in the geographical neighborhood surrounding the church, the acquisition and the selling of church properties as indicators of hope for the church. These empirical data will then be supplemented by a series of depth interviews which seek to discover from members directly how they

thought and felt about their church during several different time periods, why they themselves felt more or less hopeful about the future of the church, what the criteria were which they used, perhaps consciously or subconsciously in evaluating where the church was headed, why and what could or could not be done about it.

In the depth interviews, I shall also seek to determine what the average member understands hope to be and what relationship it has to their understanding of God and of the church. It is not thought that any two members will have identical views of hope but rather that there will be shown significant overlapping of basic positions so that common conclusions can be drawn. In the present remaining membership you will see a very high percentage of older persons. Persons remain loyally at that particular declining city church because of long association with it or because they have found that many of the other members share common values and beliefs and so they feel comfortable there. This often goes so far as to include similar tastes in clothes, foods, recreational outlets etc. Not least among those commonly held concerns for us in this project is that of theological beliefs and practices. There is a direct correlation between how persons in a declining church think and view events. They will not always be unanimous when an issue is first raised but they

would not still be members there if they were unable to live with the decisions of the majority over a long period of time. There is a definite homogeneity evident when one gets acquainted with such a membership.

A declining city church may be defined as one which grew to nearly 1,000 members or more at one time, which had built extensive facilities to provide multiple activities for that large membership but which has found itself in a dramatically changed neighborhood and over the succeeding years has experienced a decline in its membership, finances, neighborhood, professional staff as well as volunteers, activities, influence in the community and in the denomination. Once considered the most attractive and desired place to go to church or to be the minister such city churches now are avoided and find it difficult to obtain active professional staff or adequate volunteer workers for its boards and committees. Furthermore such city churches often see themselves in comparison with the one or two large metropolitan city churches which seem to exist in every city. These large city churches often have rather large endowment funds, strong traditions of serving in their community which draw members from many miles around. They are able to provide the complete range of contemporary activities for every age group and to provide the volunteer and professional staff to do it well. Seeing

others continue to succeed where they once were also a recognized leader in the community makes it difficult for some of the members of a declining city church to continue their confidence in the future of their own church. They measure their hope in proportion to the cultural signs of size and strength.

However the most important aspect of the declining city church is that of their theological position, their understanding of who they are and what they are to be doing in relationship to God as revealed to us through Jesus Christ. It is assumed in this paper that while the case study is being conducted on a single city church many of the characteristics which are most fundamental to it can also be found in a large number of other similar churches. This was documented most comprehensively by Ezra Jones and Robert Wilson in their recent work "What's Ahead for 'Old First Church'" which dealt with over 200 such churches in over 100 cities across our country. They pointed out the importance of having a clearly understood theological position or purpose for the members of a congregation and that one of the signs of a declining city church was lack of having a clearly understood, widely held position on the mission of the church. This lack of purpose reflected in lack of goals and willingness to try anything new is often seen as a challenge to that which is old and

therefore to be resisted since they feel more confident in the old and have not enough interest or willingness to risk something new. The case study documents some of the commonly recurring factors which evidence more or less hope among the members in themselves, their church and their God.

BACKGROUND

The Hollywood Congregational Church, Hollywood, California was founded in 1914 by Dr. John Carter who began the process of gathering persons to worship on Sundays in his home. At that time there were few homes built in what is now downtown Hollywood, people were moving into the area to take advantage of the climate and the opportunities to work. Other churches were also being founded, each with its particular historical traditions and orientation to daily life. Dr. Carter's was a very practical expression of Christianity in the congregational tradition of individual understanding of God's revelation in His Son Jesus Christ and one's acceptance of Him meant also the support of the church.

Three years later he was succeeded by a young man who was to remain with the church for the next 32 years and would be responsible for building that church and its position in the community.

Dr. James Hamilton Lash was a young minister in his early thirties when he was called to come and serve the Hollywood Congregational Church. He brought to his ministry a strong personal desire to serve his Lord and the people of his church. Under his leadership the church began to plan to build its Sanctuary erecting the first unit of a complete facility early in 1920. The size of the membership was still small (221 in 1919 but had grown to 350 by 1921 and by 1926 it would reach 752). It was an exciting time in the life of the church. The First World War had just ended and the world could again turn its attention to living. Hollywood was the place to live and everyone there seemed to be alive with the expanding area.

Theologically, Dr. Lash was somewhat more liberal than his predecessor and gained the reputation for being the liberal protestant pastor of Hollywood. Yet this meant no loss in personal conviction or dedication. He was also a scholar and well known for his pastoral care of his people. This was especially helpful since families were moving into Hollywood to settle, build a home and raise

their families. Many families are still living in the area in the homes built during this decade. It was a growing time, a time of expansion and every part of society experienced it in that community. The entertainment field was just opening in the late twenties and thirties first with silent movies and then with sound. The Church shared this boom and added to their Sanctuary building, then later adding a second large facility including a gymnasium, stage, kitchen, showers and locker rooms as well as several classrooms.

During the 1930's and 1940's the church continued to experience strong growth. During the Second World War Southern California was the staging ground for much of the action in the Pacific Theater. The aircraft industry moved in and developed, expanding into one of the largest concentrations of that industry in the world. The scientific revolution and technology served not only the war but also to expand the movies and entertainment. The negative destruction of and fear caused by the war went side by side with the continued increase of the growth of the church. Membership grew from 693 in 1935 to 857 in 1941, 984 in 1945 and 1,009 are recorded in the Annual Yearbook of

Congregational Christian Churches for 1947.¹ Members were involved in nearly every type of business venture. Many assumed significant positions of leadership in the community. All were busy working and expected their church to be a part of their lives. Many of their social contacts came from the church - often they met their future husband or wife through activities at the church. Children and youth were expected to attend Sunday School and Youth activities as a matter of course not a matter of personal choice. The theological position of this period might be paraphrased with the scripture "If God is for us (which he obviously is) who can stand against us?"

There were some real losses during these years but the church as a whole knew one another, were involved in many of the same pursuits, were able to share the burdens as well as the joys, had a pastor whom they knew and loved and so undertook to complete the plans they had begun back in the early 20's.

The Lash Memorial Chapel and Office Building were completed in 1949 adding a beauty and usefulness to the entire facility. It was built with the same devotion and

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The above figures are taken from a count of the names in the church directory or from the Annual Yearbook of the denomination.

support as the original Sanctuary building which by now had been expanded and added to providing additional classrooms, reception room, entrance hallway and balcony. The seating capacity had been expanded from around 200 to nearly 500 including a full choir section, dining room which could seat nearly 200 for dinner and a large well-equipped kitchen. These facilities were used extensively with the income from weddings performed by Dr. Lash in a single year reaching a total of \$10,000. It was the place to get married. It was the fashionable thing to do to go to church. And the members felt God was with them. They responded by participating, by encouraging others to attend and join and by giving of their financial resources to the church. Sometimes this was in the form of property that was given or left to the church. Sometimes it was in the leaving of a bequest to the church. This added to the feeling of success and well it could for it showed a healthy financial picture and a strong devotion on the part of the members.

Even before Dr. Lash retired in 1949 the signs of change had come to the church and the community. Following World War II young men and their families began moving out of the city into the suburbs. They were looking for more space, more quiet, more pleasant surroundings than the city was offering at that time. Those who could afford to do so

bought homes in the area and members of the large city churches were asked to help finance new church construction for the new areas. The Hollywood Congregational Church was one of those city churches who were involved in considering how and why they should help to build churches in other locations. The sense of mission for Christ was not clear - especially when they were beginning to see some of the potential troubles which seemed to be coming especially in the area of finances.

Following Dr. Lash there came a succession of different ministers. The largest single change occurred immediately when Dr. Lash's Associate was not asked to become the Senior Minister and chose instead to move out to the suburbs and found a new Congregational Church located where the young families were. The membership rolls of the Hollywood Church had fluctuated between 818 and 1,009 between 1930 and 1947 which was its highest recorded. In 1948 it was reduced to 805 and by 1950 it was reported as 640. The newly founded Congregational Church in the suburbs began growing rapidly to over 2,000 members in the 1960's while the Congregational Church in the city continued to decline to 434 by 1960. Many of the younger families had moved out before 1950 but had retained their membership in the city church because of longtime family ties and their own personal relationship with Dr. Lash.

With the passing on of this longtime pastor, friend and leader many chose to relate more to the churches in their own neighborhood so that their children and young people could have the advantages of a neighborhood church which they had enjoyed so much when they were growing up.

With the change in leadership and the rapid decline in membership the church in the city was also faced with three other significant and critically important factors. 1) Each of the ministers who succeeded Dr. Lash's 32 year pastorate had their own personal theological views and ways of ministering. When there has been such a long pastorate often persons become familiar with that individual's personal approach to theology, etc. When this changes often members of the church find it difficult to also change their own expectations. This is especially true in churches which have less traditional ritual and organization and which are therefore more influenced by the personality of the individual minister. This is as hard on the minister as it is on the congregation. The familiar pattern took place in the Hollywood Church. Ministers would come, stay for one to four years and then leave often unhappy with themselves and with the church. Then an interim minister or several would be arranged to fill the pulpit on Sundays and perhaps to take care of emergency pastoral needs. Each time a minister would leave there

would be another sense of rejection experienced by the congregation, some more members would leave and they would have to begin again the process of looking at who they were, what they had to offer to another minister. This pattern continued for the next twenty-five years with only one minister remaining more than the 4 years and he concluded his parish ministry there to enter the field of teaching in a nearby state college. By this time he was only on parttime salary at the church and all other staff positions were also parttime. Activities had been curtailed to being just those which could be led by the members of the church and it was a rather discouraging situation - though one commonly experienced by city churches which change their ministers often.

A second significant factor influencing the life of the city church during the 50's and 60's and continuing into the early 70's was the rapid change in the neighborhood around the church. During these years the single family homes began to be sold as older members of the family recognized that they did not need such a big house now that their children had grown up and moved away to raise their families elsewhere, taxes on property continued to increase and the amount of crime and violence was rising. Many sold their homes moving away from the city rather than seeking to stay and change it. Others sold

their single family homes and moved into smaller homes or more often into apartment buildings which were more secure and did not require the physical upkeep of a house and its grounds. This was often experienced as a negative experience by those who were having to leave the house which had so many happy memories and as a necessity, something which must be endured. Some have made the best of it - others may never recover.

The neighborhood change also brought different types of persons into the area around the church. Often these were persons attracted to Hollywood because of its reputation as the entertainment capitol of the world. They did not expect to build homes and raise families. They had come West to make their fortune and to become an overnight success. The deep motivation for hard work, honesty, frugality and support of churches, schools etc. was not so much a part of the way of living or believing for those moving into the apartments in the area. By 1972 the mobility factor in the students at the nearby Hollywood High School was over 85% on its way up to over 108% in 1976 according to the school records. Families would move into an apartment near the church, move out and then be back in a neighboring apartment all within a single year. These families have few roots. They move with their work or their whims. They do not expect to become settled members

of a neighborhood church nor do their children usually attend one. And so the population of those living in the immediate area of the church changed radically in their orientation to the community, to their families and to the local church. In addition their values of property were radically different. Since they did not own much property they also had little concern to take care of property owned by others. The neighborhood began to be run down. As buildings deteriorated landlords who no longer lived nearby neglected to make the necessary repairs. Without these repairs the buildings could no longer attract high rents and the downward cycle continued. Members of the church who continued to live in the area now began to avoid coming to the church at nights because of the potential risk involved. Large, high quality stores in the area moved out to the suburb shopping centers and discount stores took their place. During this period property which had come to the church through bequests was sold from time to time to keep the funds of the church strong, the last piece being our parking lot which was sold in 1970 to make way for a potential highrise office building which has yet to be built.

As the neighborhood declined and members moved away so the hope of the members in the future of the church grew dim. The change in leadership did not help change this

picture nor did the constant need to take a census of their assets build any confidence.

There is yet a third significant factor which must be acknowledged which may be even more fundamental to the loss of hope among the members of this declining city church than either the changing neighborhood or leadership of their church. I am referring to their own personal relationship with God as He is seen to be related by them to their own lives and especially to their own health in this world and entering into the next. This becomes at one and the same time both a very practical matter as our years increase with close business associates, friends, and loved ones passing on before us and also a very theological matter since it calls into conflict the cultural image of strength and success which is the mythical image often used as the test of whether God is with us or not, and the inner spiritual understanding of God in our lives. The words read and spoken at a traditional Christian Memorial Service are not always the ones believed and experienced by those who come to hear them. Many may believe with their heads because they know that is what they are supposed to believe. But to have experienced the assurance of God in their own lives personally assuring them of the resurrection and the future with Christ is quite a different thing. This is basically the area in which a person's hope either

is strong or is weak. It is the area which is dealt with in the depth interviews which constitutes the major emphasis of the remainder of this chapter.

In summary one might say that the background sketched above of the Hollywood Congregational Church might be rather typical of that experienced by many city churches. Businesses moved in where families used to reside, then business moved out or became run down inviting a totally different type of resident or perhaps few residents at all and only offices surrounding the church. Its own members choosing to move away gradually losing touch with their "home" church and yet sufficient numbers remaining to keep radical change from taking place within the church itself.

To bring this background statement up to date requires going beyond the early 1970's and into the period of reevaluation and reassessment of the middle 1970's.² It was during the year 1976 that serious thought was given to selling the entire church and relocating. This was not a new idea. Each of several of the last ministers had also dared to suggest this possibility to the loyal members. The purpose was clearly to seek ways that the future of the

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See Appendix A and B for Plans developed 1974-1975.

church might continue to serve effectively instead of simply continuing a steady decline. By 1972 it had declined to 256 and by 1977 it was to reach 196. Members added each year could not match those moving away or passing on into the Greater Life.

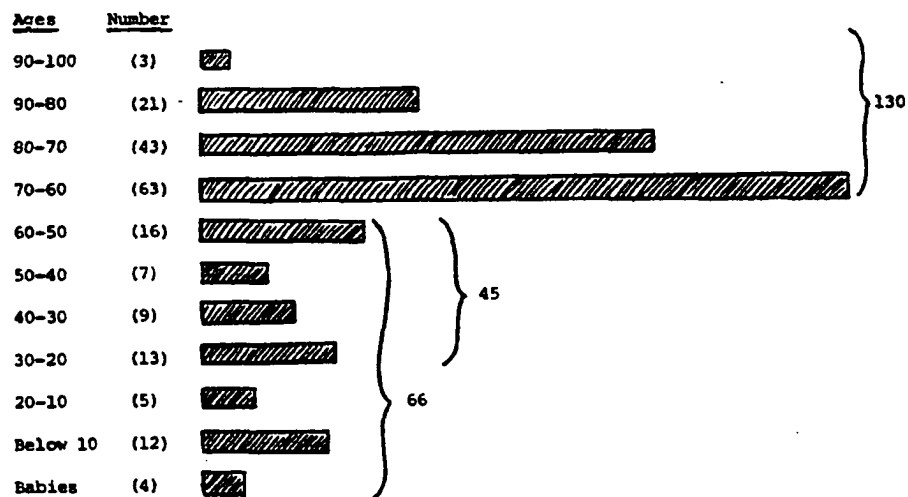
The Board of Trustees considered the financial situation of the funds, the deteriorating condition of the large buildings, the overabundance of space in proportion to the size of the membership and came to the conclusion that it did not make sense to continue spending so much money on buildings which were used so little. They therefore took the matter to the membership informally first to ask what they wanted to do. In the meantime they had been approached by two other churches which were interested in purchasing our present property and had located three potential relocation sites within a few blocks of our present location. We had discussed relocating further out into the neighborhoods where families were now living but recognized that if we were to do this it would be virtually the same as leaving our older members totally. We recognized that there were many other churches in the city area which could serve them but questioned whether some of them would ever join another church since their traditions were so deep with ours.

We also considered merging with another church as had already been accomplished in 1958 when members from the nearby West Hollywood Community Christian Church came and joined with the Hollywood Congregational Church. Perhaps 60-80 members came from this merger and several are still active. They brought with them some funds and considerable energy and deep dedication to one another and to being actively involved in the work of the church. This was seen as a sign of hope for it added members, finances and therefore made a brighter future possible to imagine, still using the cultural terms for measuring hope. (A significant difference exists between optimism and hope when properly understood. This will be dealt with in Chapter III. The above mentioned situation is a clear illustration of optimism even though for a few members it might also have some valid fragments of hope in it.)

Upon the Trustees' presentation and request an informal "Straw Ballot" was passed out for members to indicate their informal preference to sell, to relocate on an existing structure, or to sell and build. The results initially were that 64% of those present voted to sell and rebuild. It did not take very long, however, for the members who wanted to stay to begin working to sell the minister rather than the church buildings. Following my call for a membership vote of confidence in whether I

should stay or leave which came out strongly in my favor (87%) we returned to the major issue for which we gathered additional information about the relative costs of staying, relocating and rebuilding. When the official vote was taken it was unanimous that we not sell because the costs of rebuilding would be far too great. The most hopeful aspect of this experience was that the membership had the experience, for the first time in 25 years, of making such a major decision 1) with a sense of unanimity, 2) with consistent ministerial leadership, 3) with the ability to move on to consider potential changes in the church which might meet some of its specific needs. It remains to be seen how much God was a part of these decisions but it is already obvious to many of the members that living with God is more of a process than a static existence and that to be true to following Him means not always staying in the same place doing the same thing. Their expectations are beginning to change in proportion to their understanding of God and their experience of His love through others.

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ESTIMATED ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP



DEPTH INTERVIEWS OF MEMBERS

To more fully understand the beliefs and feelings of members of the city church being studied, interviews were held with a selected number of the members chosen to represent the common range of positions held by the members. The questions were designed to move from those which would be easy to answer and non-threatening to those which might be considered rather personal and private since they related specifically to how an individual believes about and experiences God in their own personal life. Some questions asked essentially the same question but in different words and images. These questions were not asked by questionnaire but rather in an informal, friendly atmosphere. All persons interviewed were already known by the questioner and were quite willing to participate although they did not know just what the questions would be about.

The following questions were among those asked each church member:

1. How long have you lived here in the city?

2. How long have you been a member of the Hollywood Congregational Church?
3. Do you think hope is real?
4. What are some things that make you feel most hopeful?
5. What are some situations which make you feel hopeless?
6. What are some other words that you would use for hope?
7. What are some words you would use for hopeless?
8. What do you think is the source of hope - where does it come from?
9. What do you think is the difference between hope and optimism?
10. What do you think the Bible says about hope?
11. Is there any relationship for you between the Cross of Jesus Christ and hope?
12. Is there any relationship for you between the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and hope?
13. What would make you feel more hopeful about a) the community, b) the church, c) your own life?
14. Do you sometimes feel that your hopes are so far beyond reality that you might as well not keep on hoping?
15. Do you think that history is already predetermined?

16. Do you think that there will be a repetition of things i.e. that history will keep repeating itself?
17. What do you think about what some people call "the Last Days" or the "Judgment Day"?
18. Do you think that someday we will be accountable to God for what we have done or not done?
19. Do you think a person can create hope themselves?
20. What is the future that you look forward to for yourself? for your church? for the world?
21. Do you think God has hope? - If so what does He hope for?
22. Do you think that having hope makes a big difference in how a person lives?
23. Is there a direct relationship for you between when persons have health they therefore also feel hopeful but when they feel poorly they feel more hopeless?
24. Do you believe that members of this church generally feel more hopeful when there is large attendance on Sunday mornings and things are going well - than when the pews are mostly empty and we have financial problems and the buildings need repairs?
25. What gives you hope?
26. Do you remember any of the promises of God in the Bible? If so, which are your favorites?

The results of the interviews were to basically confirm the facts a) that members of the city church do not have a wide knowledge of the Bible or God's Promises set forth in it, b) that most members believe in hope and relate it both to faith and to optimism without easily distinguishing between the two, c) that they do believe that one's emotions and culture influence one's hope but, however, it really should not do so, d) that history probably will repeat itself although there was a wide range between those who thought that everything was already predetermined and those who believed that new things are always happening, e) most concurred that hope, in its essence, was initially outside the individual and comes from God yet even so it must be received within the person to be real for them, f) there was a complete split between those who felt that the Cross of Jesus Christ had anything to do with hope and those who thought it had nothing to do with it, however all agreed that the resurrection was certainly related to hope, g) most but not all evidenced a belief that there was something to look forward to for themselves beyond this world but several responded that they looked forward to continuing doing just what they were doing, most of those members interviewed did not want to deal with hopelessness and were quite reticent to deal with it or think about it. Some mentioned the difficulties

which depressions caused and that the best way out of it was through prayer and hope.

Following the interview we talked together for several minutes sharing a part of what I was focusing on in this project and particularly on those areas of their theological understanding which I felt they were open to expanding as a result of our interview. These usually focused on the areas of the essential relationship between hope and God, between God's Promises in the Bible and hope for our future, and a new relationship which we have with the God of process rather than just the God of past traditions.

It was difficult for those members interviewed to think of hope in terms of the church's relationship to the direction of the community. This was an area which they had not spent much time thinking about. They realized the influence which the neighborhood had upon the church but had hardly begun to think in terms of the church having or needing to have any particular influence (or mission) on the community. Those things seemed to be beyond their immediate field of concern and/or experience.

Feelings of hopelessness were most prevalent when thinking about the extent of evil, violence, famine,

disease, etc. in the world and the frustration of not being able to do anything about it. "As soon as we send over more medical technology and fewer babies and older persons die then the more mouths there are to feed and until farmers in over populated countries can produce enough food or international politicians can learn how to distribute the surplus from one area of the world to another, the more hunger there is in the world."

In the case of their own community, there is a very limited sense of relating the future of the church with the future of the community. Their thoughts about the future of the church are relatively nebulous with only slight hints of directions in which the church can, should or may be able to become more effective as a witness to God's power and love.

When thinking about their own future, members of the declining city church, most of whom had lived there for 20-60+ years and had been members of the church at least that long, became more theological. They usually related their own future to God and to hope in God and in Jesus Christ. Many were able to return to the Bible for assurance of their own personal failure although they had not made a connection between God and the future of their declining city church.

In the Planning Committee Reports, especially the Master Plan which they developed over a two year period, members of the church had the opportunity to consider and reconsider the relationship between God and the future of their church. The Reports and Master Plan are included at the end of this Professional Project because they document the rather extensive method, and detailed as well as general suggestions which came out of this effort to get the members of the church to think about the future of their church and to take some definite actions to improve its outlook. I had already decided the general area of my project and sought to actively influence the proceedings to help direct them toward reconsidering their theological position in order to provide a theological foundation upon which future direction for the city church could be established. The results of the depth interviews of key church members shows that this attempt was not successful. Hope for the future of the church was not clearly identified with God in the minds of the members of the congregation.

The interviews also showed that the members' understanding of the relationship of the Cross to hope was very slight even though they were clear about the Resurrection being related to hope. Following the interviews when I returned to this it was not difficult to show the necessary relationship between them and to have this accepted by the

person being interviewed. I don't think it was foreign to them - they had just not made the necessary connection between the Cross and the Resurrection and had kept them in separate compartments in their theological understanding of God and hope. This is one of the major areas in which I believe Moltmann's theological insights could have a specific and extremely advantageous effect on changing the basic understanding of hope currently held by the members.

The Hollywood Congregational Church is located on one of the most famous Boulevards in the world. It is the center of images of glory and stardom around the world. It is the mecca for musicians, recording artists, film personalities, advertising agencies, broadcasting stations, etc. This is the only protestant church on the Boulevard in the heart of Hollywood. Other churches bring their youth groups, under heavy supervision, to walk down Hollywood Boulevard to see the prostitutes, pimps and "weird" elements of society. In one section of Hollywood there are some 60,000 homosexual persons in what is reputed to be the largest concentration of this lifestyle in our country. And here in the city the members of the church struggle along in their individual lives day in and day out. As violence and deterioration in the area increases it becomes increasingly unsafe for members to come to the church and

parking becomes an increasingly difficult problem since the last parking area has been sold.

CONCLUSION

Unless there is some major new element which enters this situation there is no question that the present declining position of this city church will continue. There is the urgent need for a theological understanding of hope which will provide the possibility of developing a new model for the declining city church.

Chapter III addresses itself to the purpose of showing how a new theological understanding of hope is possible for members of a declining city church starting from their own basic theological positions and experiences and comparing them with certain basic concepts in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope and related works. In Chapter IV we will examine some of the implications which a radically different theological understanding of hope, along the lines suggested by Moltmann, might conceivably have upon the model of this particular city church.

Chapter III

A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT OF HOPE

Today in all dimensions of life we are searching for a future in which we can really hope. For only such a future can inspire our present work, give meaning to our present sufferings, and intensify our present joy. More radically than earlier generations we know that we live in history where¹ everything changes and nothing remains in its place.

In Chapter I we set the background for developing a new model for a declining city church while in Chapter II we looked specifically at an individual city church through a Case Study approach to historical statistics and depth interviews. The need to change the downward direction of the church as an organization is obvious if saving the institution were our primary concern. However, it is not, because the reason for the church's existing is not to be a

¹

Jürgen Moltmann, Religion, Revolution and the Future (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1969); as quoted in Walter H. Capps, The Future of Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 102.

successful business or social operation but rather to be an expression of God's love and power creatively transforming the lives of individuals and hopefully through them also the community and at least a part of the world. We discovered in the interviews, in the Master Plan (Appendix B) and in the history of the church that there is a strong tendency to retain familiar traditions, a widespread lack of understanding of the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, some relationship made between hope and God, some understanding of how God might suffer with Jesus for us, and a limited knowledge of the Promises of God in the Bible.

One of the valid criticisms of the Christian Church today is that it is often not relevant to where the people are. Moltmann emphasizes this especially when dealing with suffering and freedom.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Chapter is to set forth as clearly as possible essential aspects of Moltmann's Theology of Hope which relate to the problems being faced by one declining city church. The implications of his positions will not be dealt with in this chapter but will be a major factor in Chapter IV.

THE SOURCE OF HOPE

Moltmann's theological understanding of hope is many-faceted and all the facets are closely interrelated. In his Theology of Hope he begins with redefining history and eschatology, then moves to the promises of God and the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ before applying these to the church. In his second major work Moltmann deals in more depth with the understanding which a person must have of the suffering of God in and through Jesus Christ in order to believe in the hope of the Risen Lord and experience the liberation from the fear of death, anxiety etc.. "In Christianity the cross is the test of everything that deserves to be called Christian. One may add that the cross alone, and nothing else, is its test, since the cross refutes everything, and excludes the syncretistic elements in Christianity."²

The primary source of hope for a Christian lies beyond the Cross and Resurrection in the love and power of God shown us most conclusively and completely in the Cross and Resurrection. We will begin there and move from

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Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 7.

consideration of the source of Hope to its nature and finally to our reason for hope.

THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION

The Cross and Resurrection cannot be separated if we are to understand the source and nature of hope. One cannot separate the participation in suffering from the release from bondage and death. The victory is complete and able to be believed in precisely because it reveals that the nature of the source of hope is eternal, self-giving love which is both powerful and willing to suffer, both beyond all history and willing and able to enter into history, both universal and individual.

Moltmann seeks to be very clear that while we can talk about various aspects of Jesus Christ's life and death separately, they are in truth a single wholeness and essentially therefore not at all separated one from the other nor either aspect from God.

The historical Jesus is not 'half Christ', nor is the risen Christ the other half of Jesus. It is a question of one and the same person and his unique history. The risen Christ is the historical and crucified Jesus and vice versa. The reason for the 'differentiated connection' of the historical and eschatological perspectives is the uniqueness of the person of Jesus and his history; because of his death on the cross, the only way in which they can adequately be described is by the

double formulae 'Jesus Christ' and 'crucified and risen'. But what makes possible the eschatological recognition of his person, his life and death in the light of his resurrection from the dead? What justifies it? The decisive element for primitive Christianity was not just the history of the life and death, the proclamation and the work of Jesus; it attached equal weight to the unexpected and underivable new factors of his resurrection by God, of the gift of the spirit and of faith among Jews and Gentiles.

The union of Jesus with God and of God with Jesus was constituted for it by that event which it originally and rightly called 'the resurrection of Jesus'.... The confession of the crucified Jesus as Lord was grounded on faith in the God who had raised him. Conversely, this in God was completely and utterly a resurrection faith and concerned the person of the crucified Christ, in whom God had acted and in whom the God who raises from the dead had manifested himself.³

The crisis facing our churches today is often related to concentration on a partial theology - a hope in the Resurrection without the Cross. There can be no such foundation for the Christian since these are in essence inseparable. The hope which exists without the Cross is inaccurate, incomplete and essentially quite limited in its power. God is often seen as not participating in the suffering of this world and is therefore also beyond full understanding of what a person may be going through. There is little identification with such a God of the Resurrection only. Such a view of hope often is closer to utopianism or idealism,

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Ibid., p. 160-161.

to dreams and visions than to a theological understanding of God as revealed through Jesus Christ.

What men essentially expect and hope for from the future is articulated not only in their dreams by day and night but even more in their suffering because of what they lack and because what they have is not that which they seek. The consciousness of misery in history is, of course, very different, but in our pain and suffering we are⁴ nearer to reality than in our visions and dreams.

God must be the God within and beyond suffering if there is to be any firm foundation upon which to base our hope. God shows that He is both willing and able to do this through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. For in this single event was revealed the fulfillment of promises made through the ages pointing decisively to the future.

All events, ideas and movements in history have at bottom something in common, which manifests itself in them all and makes it possible to understand them and accept them as an enrichment of our own life...History becomes intelligible when it is related to an underlying foundation,⁵ to some eternally springing, eternally driving force...

4

Ibid., pp. 31, 113.

5

Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 254.

Through the Cross and Resurrection the future opens to us for it reveals the source of our hope beyond events or their meanings which are limited to a particular time or space. We must be continually open to the coming future realizing that it is rooted in the past but that a present without any roots is already dead for it is stripped of part of the essential conditions for its future. But there is a significant difference for Moltmann between simply repeating a particular traditional action or ritual and acknowledging events and meanings in the past which influence the present and future.

The power of the past, which drags everything that exists into its wasteland where things cease to exist, is broken by hope which draws the new future into the sufferings of the present. The anticipation of the ultimately new lies hidden with the historically new.⁶

History needs to be reunderstood in a totally different sense. Rather than being primarily related to chronological events taking place at a particular time history must be understood as essentially meaning directed toward the future. Hidden within the events which may take place at a particular time is the meaning for the future of that particular event. This meaning is the

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Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 31, p. 122.

essence of the event - not just its happening nor its particular meaning at that present time. The Cross was an event which took place at a particular time but its meaning was in no way limited by the time and/or space it filled.

The source of hope for the Christian therefore lies far beyond the empirical past or present - even beyond the empirical future, for when it arrives it too will be but a signpost of a future still to come. This freedom to translate and reinterrupt the meaning of the Cross is one of the basic needs for the Christian Church in the city today.

We must find hope in both the Cross and the Resurrection, for they go together. Can we also find hope in and beyond history?

The real category of history is no longer the past and the transient, but the future. The perception and interpretation of past history is then no longer archaeological, but futuristic and eschatological...If the meaning of history is expected from the future and conceived in terms of the mission of the present, then history is neither a tangle of necessities and laws nor a tumbling-ground for meaningless caprice. Future as mission shows the relation of today's tasks and decisions to what is really possible, points to open possibilities in the real and to tendencies that have to be grasped in the possible.

This radical redefinition of history, from thinking of it as something that happened in the past at a particular time, to a continuing process which is actualizing itself, drawn toward a future completion by a source far beyond yet able to be quite active also within it, is one of the major transitions necessary in the theological understanding of hope in a city church today. When we are open to new possibilities in history, when we can believe and see God actively at work actualizing the future yet not being locked into a particular time/place event, we begin to grasp the reality of hope as beyond suffering, and beyond history.

Yet this is not a commonly accepted view of hope not of history even for the Christian church.

In Christianity's long 'religious' epoch Christian hope was fettered and rendered ineffective by the 'myths of the eternal return.' Verification in history was, then, not a matter of the inauguration of the new and unexpected but rather of the return to the origins and the repetition of antiquity. Christian faith was proclaimed not as Exodus out of the bondage of the past and through the boundaries of the present into the freedom of a new future but as a turning back to the security of sacred sources...

More than at any other time we need to have a new understanding of hope based on the future.

Today the future has become the common problem of the whole of mankind, for we will either gain the future in a common struggle or lose everything in a common annihilation.

We must look, therefore, not just to the past but also to the future and not just to a nebulous, indistinct future, but specifically to that which is shown to us in the promises of the Bible and the promises fulfilled to date. One example begins in Genesis 15:6 where God promises Abram that his descendants shall be as the number of stars in the heavens even though he was old and so was his wife and they had no children. Suffice it to say that by the time Paul refers to this promise from God recorded in the Old Testament in his letter to the Romans (4:3ff) this promise was well on its way to being fulfilled. So also Jesus Himself was continuously referring back to the Old Testament prophecies pointing out how He was the fulfillment of the promises made there (e.g. Luke 4:21, Matt. 5:17).

The essential predicate of God accordingly lies in the statement, 'faithful is he that promised.' His essence is not his absoluteness as such, but the faithfulness with which he reveals and identifies himself in the

history of his promise as 'the same'. His divinity consists in the consistency of his faithfulness....The word which reveals God has thus fundamentally the character of promise and is therefore eschatological in kind. It is grounded upon the event of God's faithfulness and open towards it. It sets us on a path whose goal it shows and guarantees in terms of promise. It places the one who receives it in a position of insurmountable antithesis and hostility to the existing reality of this world. It gives ground for hope¹⁰ and criticism, and expects us to endure in hope.....

God's power to fulfill His promises in the city today is constantly demonstrated in what He is doing in the lives of persons with whom our church comes in contact. For example: a young girl left her home in another state and came to Hollywood to find her fortune. After three years on the streets, having experienced some of the worst that our modern culture does to persons, she tried to end her life. She was taken to the County hospital because she had no money. She received some psychiatric counseling and was released. One Sunday she walked into our church where she had been told to go and find other people to be with in a good atmosphere. Unable to even speak to anyone that first week, she gradually began to rebuild her faith and her life. Like Peter there were moments of high insight and deep inspiration and there were times of glaring failure. But the promises of God were true.

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Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 143.

When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice, for the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not fail you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers which he swore to them.....you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.¹¹

With ever deepening understanding she came to a personal experience of God in her life which gave her the ongoing strength and inspiration to go through the times of failure without being utterly destroyed but becoming stronger in her faith. Today she is happily married to another young adult who came to know God's power to fulfill His promises through our church. Individually and together they are living examples of how God is working in their lives, not just in the past and present but especially toward a future in which their hopes and faith will be completed in the very presence of God.

Our source of hope lies beyond the daily experiences which we have personally. It looks forward to the fulfillment of those promises which God makes to us through the Bible and His Spirit as well as in the events of our day.

¹¹

Deuteronomy 4:29-31 (RSV)

If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever.¹²

A young man confronted me one Christmas morning in my church office, pointed a small gun at me and demanded the church's money. I counted the brass bullets in the cylinder, discovered he had been on straight acid for two to three months and went into the Christmas Day Worship Service twenty minutes later knowing that it was God who had kept me alive that morning for some future reason yet to be revealed. I have never before nor since been so close to death nor so filled with Life.

Moltmann redefines eschatology which is usually understood as the 'doctrine of the last things' or the 'doctrine of the end' for this presupposes an empirical beginning and ending to God's creating. Rather we must understand that the creating of the world is in essence not a physical event but rather is a process which is continuing toward some future but not necessarily some future termination but rather perhaps a continually developing existence. The source of our hope again, rests upon that ultimate creating power and wisdom which is not limited to having initially started something and then set it down and

12

John 14:15-16 (RSV)

walked away from it. Rather God himself is intimately integrated into the process itself. He is both in and above the events of our day. He is involved in the creative transformation of persons and events toward a future meaning which we can only partly comprehend now but in which we can have complete trust. The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus are the sign and seal of God's ultimate ability to overcome evil and to assure us of the triumph of love. It is this supreme illustration of God's power to fulfill His promises which most completely and convincingly confirms the validity of our hope for the future with Him.

The scriptures, as historical witnesses, are open towards the future, as all promises are open towards the future.¹³

The traditional view of history is that it is expulsion from paradise and the way into an alien land. The objective then is to return to that land from whence we once were driven. Salvation thus understood and thus commonly held by members of a city church, is always a seeking to return to the past instead of a movement forward into a new and better future. Could the future be potentially worse rather than always better? What assurance is there that it is better to risk the unknown than to seek to

¹³

Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 283.

return to what is already known through past experience? First, the recognition that the past can never be totally repeated and so one's hopes in its complete return will never be satisfied. Second, usually the past is so glorified that the disappointment at not being able to measure up to what has been so glorified creates an even deeper depression and disillusionment. Third, the promises of God and the demonstrations of His power in the world (again most completely in the Cross-Resurrection of Jesus Christ) point toward the ultimate victory of good over evil, of light over dark, of love over hate.

The point of reference and the aim in the exposition of the biblical witness is not something universal which lies at the bottom of history...(it is) the concrete, present mission of Christianity towards the future of Christ for the world...the reconciliation of the godless...the calling of the heathen to participation in the historic mission of Christianity. The link between coming history and past history is provided in the light of this forward-moving, historic mission...that moves forwards and outwards. The word-event in which past events are brought to expression means the event of being called to the future of salvation in Christ and to the present labour of hope in the service of reconciliation.¹⁴

The truth of the promises made in the Bible may be found in the fact that they can be shown to agree with the existing realities which we can all experience without being limited

14

Ibid., pp. 283-284.

to them. The source of our hope in these promises does not pass away but is revealed in many events in many times.

Promises are transmitted, events of God's faithfulness are recounted, all pointing to the future which has not as yet come about. In this conception of tradition the future which is announced and promised increasingly dominates the present. This tradition of promise turns our eyes not towards some primeval, original event, but towards the future and finally towards an eschaton of fulfillment.¹⁵

There is a conflict between present reality and hope since we hope for the perfect and what is possible in our limited present is less than that. We are saved from despair by the hope that is within and beyond us. "But the hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8:24,25.) Everywhere in the New Testament the Christian hope is directed towards what is not yet visible but is yet to come.

THE NATURE OF HOPE

The nature of hope is evidenced nowhere more clearly than in willingness of God to suffer for and with

¹⁵

Ibid., p. 298.

us. For Moltmann the nature of hope assumes many of the qualities traditionally associated with God. Always there is the emphasis upon the future direction of hope looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises. In the creative tension between the suffering and imperfection of the present lies the call to mission of the Christian with the full assurance that through his efforts something of the hoped for future may be realized.

The all-embracing vision of God and of the new creation is for Christian Hope anchored in the resurrection of the crucified Christ. In the resurrection of Christ we can know a new freedom in history which is not only liberation from the tyrannies within history but also a liberation from the tyranny and agony of history itself.

In the resurrection of Christ there can be seen a glimmer of the glory of the coming God and of his new creation. To be sure, according to the Christian faith, only Christ has yet been raised. Only in him has this future of a new being really begun, whereas we are not yet in the reality of his new being. But in faith and in hope we participate here already in the 'power of the new world'. For this reason Christ becomes for believers the focus of an all-embracing hope for the new world in which God dwells.¹⁶

Therefore hope is not only related to the future by its source and by God's promises but also through the

16

Jürgen Moltmann, Religion, Revolution and the Future (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1969); as quoted in Walter H. Capps, The Future of Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 121.

evidence of His expressions of those qualities which bring reconciliation, creativity, enrichment and fulfillment to life. It is found wherever one is set free from fear and death to rejoice and to celebrate the essential beauty and direction of creation. It is not seeking a return to the past but rather looking ahead to new actions of God coming into history at any time and in many different often unexpected ways. The result of these entrances into time by God do not only reveal more of who we are and what God is but also more of what our future will be and why it is worth looking forward to. It is to be new and different, not just a return to some "paradise-lost", but rather as Moltmann points out, to the City of God yet to come.

Hope that is founded on faith in the Cross-Resurrection and promises of God is quite different from optimism. There is a major difference between wishful thinking and the kind of hope which is tied to God and His promises, power and love. Many persons may have an optimistic outlook on life but fall far short of having the deep theological conviction that the God of all is behind and within their wishing. The major difference, however is not only in the source or content of the optimistic thinking or wishing but also in the essential nature of optimism which is basically an emotion rather than a faith. Hope on the other hand is essentially a belief and a trust in God

which makes it possible to have hope even when there is no longer the energy or attempt to be optimistic. Moltmann correctly calls this "hope against hope". It is one of the beautiful marks of hope that it persists often in contradiction to modern reason or science or technology. It does so because its source and nature are not determined nor therefore limited to this modern time or space - nor to any other. Rather they participate in the creative process which looks forward eagerly to the transformation of the present into the future.

The future toward which hope looks is not just an Americanistic "bigger is better". Rather it knows and accepts its human limitations for vision and chooses instead of looking and measuring by the external appearance of things to see more deeply into the meaning of the event, to see its nature and source, to identify in what way it has a part in the continuing creation of the world. True hope is more a matter of faith than it is an attitude of mind because it is related to God.

If you ground your hope on your experiences, then your hope or despair is going up and down with the ups and downs of your life, your personal life or the life of your society. I spoke, and am still speaking about a hope which is grounded in the resurrection of Christ. This is a resurrection from the dead, so death is overcome in this resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the hope which is grounded on this event is an unsailable hope even if the world goes down in atomic

warfare. So, this hope is alive and in these instances, where the people despair, a hope against hope. There can be hope with hope, and there can be hope against hope. The Christian hope shows its strength and its power when it comes to the question of hope against hope, or hope against despair.¹⁷

REASONS TO HOPE

God does not give up. It is His nature to continue loving, understanding, hoping for us to return His love and respond to His willingness to accept us and work toward our fulfillment. For Moltmann, "Hope alone keeps life - including public, social life - flowing free."¹⁸ He believes deeply that one strong reason to hope is the fact of suffering and pain, of alienation and hatred, of the lack of fulfillment in the present and of so many signs which point to a future which is not yet present.

Man does not need to give up because he has the ability to hear and respond to the call to mission, to fulfill his living with God's assistance, to become a co-creator of the desired future with God and with others.

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Jürgen Moltmann, "Suffering and the Ground of Our Hope". (Catalyst, cassette series, February 1977).

¹⁸

Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 324.

We hope to be involved in the great "provolution" of history wherein we begin already to change, to redirect and to creatively transform the negative aspects of life which keep the future from realizing the end to suffering, despair, violence and death. We look forward eagerly to the emerging future which is with us even as we contemplate its coming - and is often gone equally quickly. There is not the fear of the changes which are to come when one knows the ultimate source of creation itself is God.

We have reason to hope through the One who showed us the Way leaving such a change in the direction of life and history that it has never been the same since, for it opened the doors and windows to new possibilities for life, new relationships between the past, present and future, new relationships between man and man, new understandings of how to endure suffering with love and how to defeat evil and fear with faith. The price for following this Way is often quite high - but greater than the price is the assurance that God will be true to His promises, that the Way shown us through the Cross and Resurrection is sure through Jesus Christ, and that we ourselves can begin to participate in this future when we open ourselves to the hope of God and live by that hope.

The Christian community does not live from itself and for itself, but from the sovereignty of the risen Lord and for the coming sovereignty of him who has conquered death and is bringing life, righteousness and the kingdom of God.

....

The Church lives by the word of God, the word that is proclaimed, that pronounces and sends. This word has no magical quality in itself. 'The proclaimed word is directed towards that which in every respect lies ahead of it. It is open for the "future" which comes to pass in it, yet which in its coming to pass is recognized to be still outstanding.' The word which creates life and calls to faith is pro-clamation and pro-nouncement. It provides no final revelation, but calls us to a path whose goal it shows in terms of promise, and whose goal can be attained only by obediently following the promise.

....

The Christian Church has not to serve mankind in order that this world may remain what it is, or may be preserved in the state in which it is, but in order that it may¹⁹ transform itself and become what it is promised to be.

CONCLUSION

If the world is to improve; if evils are to be righted; if progress is to go forward and the qualities which make it possible for persons not only to survive together on this planet (or in the city) but also to be able to find fulfillment of the latent energies for beauty, nobility and truth are to be experienced and passed on; if

19

Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope, p. 325.

there is to be a brighter future both here and beyond, then members of all Christian Churches - even if they think they already "know it all" must become more involved in the ongoing transformation process which is initiated, inspired, sustained, sometimes even fulfilled by the Christian understanding of hope expressed by Jürgen Moltmann.

Chapter IV

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Christian proclamation is not a tradition of wisdom and truth in doctrinal principles. Nor is it a tradition of ways and means of living according to the law. It is the announcing, revealing and publishing of an eschatological event. It reveals the risen Christ's lordship over the world, and sets men free for the coming salvation in faith and hope.¹

The implications of a new understanding of hope as stated by Moltmann are radical when applied to the declining city church. It is quite clear that members of this church appear on the surface to recognize their need to grow beyond their thoughts of the past, about traditions and about the future, especially about their understanding of the relationship of the Cross to the Resurrection, of God to the future and of their faith to the proclamation of hope in and through their daily lives. It is also

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Jürgen Moltmann, Religion, Revolution and the Future (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969); as quoted in Walter H. Capps, The Future of Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 119.

extremely difficult to separate theological truths from which traditional rituals grew from the rituals themselves. This, however, must take place if the declining city church is to be free to try new styles of worship, of learning and of serving and become once more an effective witness in its location.

The new model for a declining city church will provide five basic factors for its members: 1) a new theological understanding of hope which is intellectually penetrating and academically sound; 2) regular opportunities which are designed to create a climate in which individuals may come to have a personal experience of hope in their lives; 3) the opportunity to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ; 4) the personal support of fellow-believers in the church; and 5) new organizational structures which support this new understanding of hope. In addition the new model will provide for a different style of church leadership needed by such a church and it will have an acknowledged spiritual and Christian foundation.

KEEN INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

Intellectually the church must provide challenging, penetrating and academically sound instruction for its

members. This would include specifically a vast new understanding of the radical promises which God has made through His prophets, through His actions in the chronological history of the world, and especially through His dramatic revelation in the world in Jesus Christ and His Cross and Resurrection. If the church fails to challenge the intellectual potential of its members (and of society) it will continue to lose influence in directing their lives. It will therefore need to begin once more to proclaim its relationship to the God who not only made promises to His people but who demonstrated His willingness and power to fulfill those promises through the Cross and Resurrection. We must dare to present what Moltmann calls the "cross of reality" upon which suffering and love, humanity and divinity, sin and salvation interpenetrated our human history and experience. Certainly faith is involved here but not to the exclusion of mind. The fullest and keenest intellectual minds known to man continue to focus on this event of the Cross and Resurrection as the point upon which not only a personal destiny is revealed but also a definitive statement about our corporate future. History is understood as a continuing process, not a predetermined, unalterable pattern which cannot be influenced. In the Cross and Resurrection we must answer intellectually as well as spiritually what happened to Jesus and what can therefore also happen to us.

Christian theology has to think along this line. It is not that a general truth became concrete in Jesus, but the concrete, unique, historic event of the crucifying and raising of Jesus by Yahweh, the God of promise who creates being out of nothing, becomes general through the universal eschatological horizon it anticipates. Through the raising of Jesus from the dead the God of the promises of Israel becomes the God of all men."²

It is easy for ministers of declining city churches to focus on the promises of God as being something that will only happen in the future - so long after we are all gone that it really has little power to influence the present. It is much harder to convince members that His promises are also for the present, for today and this week as well as for eternity. If we were to challenge our members' minds with more of the facts which are visible for those who look, then perhaps they would be led to experience greater hope for the future of the declining city church.

The suffering of God is not a popular topic to preach. Nor is it one members are eager to sing about in hymns. Nor is it one which is able to be understood if your God is so high and mighty that He is above feeling emotions and therefore is quite beyond understanding what you and I might be going through personally. Once more

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Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 142.

Moltmann's understanding of hope as beyond the present but also intimately related to us personally is most clearly the only way to understand the Cross and the Resurrection as a necessary single event in man's history if we are to ever come to know the personal love of God. God's promises of abundant life and of life-everlasting are hollow without His power to help us and to lift us above life and death as we are limited to it here on earth. And ultimately there is only the most limited type of "freedom" available for brief periods of time if we are not freed from the bonds of death. Our church must begin to wrestle seriously with the Cross and Resurrection intellectually if we are to experience liberation from the fears surrounding the cultural understanding of death.

As we decline in membership and grow older in years we also have been made increasingly aware not only of the increasing deterioration of our own church buildings but also of the general decline of the area, both physically and morally. The new model of the declining city church is one which will be enabled to be honestly realistic about itself and its neighborhood because its faith does not rest on imagined returns to glory nor on inevitable, "failure" of closing, but rather on the hope in the God of promise and love and power. This can free them to be realistic yet not fearful and hopefully it will also lessen the influence

of sentimental attachment to programs and/or usages of the buildings which have long since fulfilled their original purpose and now need to be radically changed to meet the needs of a new day and age. This new understanding of God and His relationship to their situation can also provide courage to enter into the community around them not timidly but with conviction, not with hesitation and fearfulness but boldly, as ambassadors of the King of Kings, representatives of the One who does not like to see children abused, men and women prostituted, Senior Citizens ignored and youth's enthusiasm and idealism belittled. The new model of the church will be one with specific areas of need chosen for specific periods of time in which the church seeks to have a positive influence in the community. This might also include encouraging some of its members to take additional courses in nearby universities or schools of Theology. This might include arranging for several courses to be taught in the church buildings as an "Academy of Religion" or "Fall School of Religion". It might take the form of a mini-seminary whose courses of instruction would not be narrow but rather include instruction ranging all the way from personal growth and development to the use of art in religious expression. Its purpose would be to challenge the intellectual capacity of interested persons in the area and to share some of the hope which brings God's love, power and personal concern into the lives of

the individual persons. If we in the church are afraid or fail to deal effectively with the mental gifts of our members they will go elsewhere to find a challenge worthy of their time and attention. Jesus Christ was a most intelligent person. Reason must be an integral part of the Christian faith for it points in the very same direction - toward a future where the promises of God made in history are fulfilled both in and beyond our time and our comprehension.

Intellectually, as well as emotionally, members of a declining city church must learn and experience a new theological understanding of hope which radically alters their clinging to the past and opens their eyes and hearts and minds to faith in a future so much more worth achieving that they are willing, even eager, to enter into the adventure because they know God is truly with them, not just now, but always.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The new model will include frequent opportunities designed to create a climate in which individuals may come to have a personal experience of hope in their lives. Too often the "life-situations" in which we come together in the church are not designed to add significantly to our

educational, emotional or social understanding of what God is actively doing in the present. Pews are all lined up in a single direction so all you can see is the back of the person in front of you and the person on each side of you. The leader is separated from the pews and raised above them in the position of an authority figure who is not to be touched, questioned or related to personally. The city can be a quite lonely place. New situations often raise new questions about what it means to live as a follower of Christ. The city church must create a climate in which mutual trust is established, God's understanding is experienced and the fact of a hope which lies beyond the immediate becomes a living reality. Once more the God who is able to suffer becomes a vital part of the God who overcomes death as an expression of His power and love and the fulfillment of His promises. Members of a city church need such personal experience of the liberating power of such an eternal hope in their own lives or else it continues to be simply an intellectual topic for discussion and debate. This tends to weaken everyone's faith, raises questions which hadn't even been thought and erodes the witness of the church. Worse than this, it also leads to despair within the individual because if God's love and power is not real for Jesus Christ then it certainly is not real for me nor for the city church.

To create a new climate of trust and hope in the declining city church implies a new style of leadership which will be dealt with later in this chapter.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

The new model of a declining city church will provide opportunities for individuals to make a personal commitment to God. Personal commitment is even more important than personal experience for it makes possible the continuing value of the experience. It is essential for such an experience to continue to have full value and the power to begin overcoming other habit patterns (whether they be thoughts or actions). Such a commitment is one of the foundations of the Christian Church without which it could be considered just another social organization among many. It could be viewed only intellectually or socially. It would have quite limited meaning and little, if any, power, certainly not the power to give a hope which lasts forever.

Yet in the city today, individuals are very reluctant to make personal commitments. Alvin Toffler gives us one way to understand this in his significant work Future Shock when he points out how frequently people are moving these days, how often they have to change friendships and

business associates, let alone the high rate of divorce among not only newlyweds but also longer marriages. Long term personal commitments which once were considered for life (if not for eternity as in the case of the Mormon religious tradition) were quite common. When a minister was called to a Congregational church in New England even one or two generations ago, it was assumed he would be there for at least ten to fifteen years if not for the rest of his life. When a person decided on a particular type of work which he would enter to make his living it was assumed that he could continue in it for the rest of his life. Now the average worker can expect to have to be retrained three times during his working years in order to keep employed. Middle term relationships, those which are expected to last only a few years are far more prevalent today, even among those who enter marriage, and short term relationships are the norm in the city, especially among the young adults. The city church has a combination of persons who have had an unusually wide range of experiences with personal commitment. Some members celebrate their 50th, even 60th wedding anniversary while others have never even had a single deep friendship nor do they ever expect to be able to have.

One of the unique aspects of Moltmann's theological understanding of Hope is its timeless nature. To make a

personal commitment to Jesus Christ and the love and power shown by God in His Cross and Resurrection means placing one's trust not in something tied to time but rather beyond time, not something that may be here today and gone when we wake up but rather to One who has the power to give deep and lasting meaning even to temporary personal relationships when they are filled with His Spirit. This is possible because His Spirit, as with hope, is rooted in the God who Jesus showed us as both within history and beyond it. The new model of a city church based on such a theological understanding of hope will provide many opportunities for individuals to make personal commitment to a timeless reality once they learn about it intellectually and have experienced it for themselves. The implications of such a commitment would not only change the complexion of the city church but it also begins to provide a faith which goes with the individual wherever they go and one which can strengthen the Christian Church in every community.

The freedom of faith must be developed into the freedom of experience and action....Faith in the resurrection becomes faith that raises up, wherever it transforms psychological and social systems, so that instead of being oriented on death they are oriented on life. The prayer of Jesus, 'And deliver us from evil', is experienced and put into practice where men are liberated from these vicious circles, where the will to life is

restored, and man comes out of the rig³ mortis of apathy and regains his life once more.

The city church must provide many more opportunities for individuals to make the kind of personal commitment to God which they know will be a long term commitment, a relationship which is lasting and will provide the deep meaning and fulfillment which God promised and for which persons in the city of all ages long.

Openness of prayer is an openness in the history of God for the future of God. God's future is directed towards this openness in his history, for in theological terms it is the 'sighing of the spirit' which cries for fulfillment and consummation ⁴ of the divine life in the world of the one who prays.

Through the theological understanding of hope one can become aware of belonging to a God who demonstrated His personal commitment to man in Jesus Christ and His power over death in the Resurrection. We come to understand that the word "hope" refers to a source of love and power far beyond the framework of time yet personal enough to ease our own suffering, take the sting from our own fears, answer questions known to be bothering us and to confirm

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Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 294.

4

Ibid., p. 313.

our faith. Hope is an essential to fulfillment of life for only through hope can we believe in the eventual victory of good over evil, life over death, fullness of life over meaninglessness, wholeness over disease, belonging to God instead of separateness from Him. The declining city church urgently needs this kind of personal commitment on the part of its members and friends. It is only possible with a radically new theological understanding of hope.

FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT

A new model will include the support of fellow-believers. They can provide the deep rich fellowship in which the persons' experience and commitment is nourished. It concentrates on encouragement, on shared experiences of faith and the strength it can give even in times of failure. It seeks to draw forth the unique gifts which God has placed in each person. It sees the sharing of faith as a means of expressing the hope that is within them. It provides companionship in times of failure as well as in times of success. This is not always available in a city where many live quite lonely lives and live with little hope that anyone will ever care about what is happening to them. Through the close, sharing fellowship the new member can experience others who trust in God and therefore in what He can and is doing in others. They can keep their personal

experience and commitment abreast of the rapid changes they face in the city. They can compare their understanding of what God wants them to do with what others believe God is saying. An accountability can develop when mutual trust has been established, which does not currently exist among older members who are quite careful not to let others know their inner thoughts and deep religious beliefs.

Times are changing. Younger persons in the city today are beginning to learn that if they have no commitments they lose part of the joy which comes from higher goals and deeper relationships. They are searching desperately for ideologies or goals worth committing their lives to. Many in the 30-50 age range have already achieved what society told them was the ultimate goal: financial independence. Now they are looking for that kind of spiritual fulfillment which Moltmann's understanding of hope points toward.

A new understanding of hope would mean that no longer would older members of the church need to hold onto the forms of the past so tenaciously. They would be able to see the future with less fear and enter it with more confidence. It would mean the acceptance of one's own mistakes as well as others' and know that one is still acceptable to God through our repentance and His

understanding of our struggles, failures as well as aspirations. Knowing that He wants to use His Love and Power for us and that it cannot fail we can make decisions about our life and that of our declining city church boldly. This fellowship of other pilgrims along the way is an essential dimension of the model which can change a declining city church.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Church organizational structures will need to be changed to provide encouragement and necessary framework for this new theological understanding of hope. The present structures in the declining city church were initially set up when it was a growing, expanding institution made up of a nominally homogeneous group of hard working younger or middle-aged families. Those same structures today often function to prevent new ideas from being tried, new uses of the building explored, new approaches to old problems returned to committees for further study. New structures are needed which provide more flexibility of method while strengthening the Christian commitment. New goals are continually needed as older ones are either achieved or allowed to pass by unfulfilled. Regular review and adjustment of organization is needed based more on ability positively to influence the

achievement of worthy future goals than to continue programs unchanged. A new structure must be one which realizes that God is working in and through the church and individuals to bring about the desired and necessary changes in the world. It would be based on what the past has provided but drawn by the vision of what the future has promised. There would be more supporting the hope for the future than providing and encouraging a return to the past.

It is beyond the scope of this particular paper to seek to design the organizational structures which would most effectively support a new theologically hope-filled city church. I suspect it would not seek to be all things to all people but would focus on specific needs of its members and neighbors and fulfill those needs unusually well. I suspect it would utilize numerous small group units to provide the learning, experiencing, supporting needs of members. I suspect it would seek to make multiple use of buildings and rooms rather than having them able to be used for only a single purpose. I am sure there are many improvements which could be designed to make current structures more effective in the declining city church. However I am equally confident that whether the structures be new or old they would not work well without the deep commitment of persons within that congregation to a new theological understanding of hope.

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

The new model for a declining city church will provide for new styles of leadership. Credentials for leadership will be more related to personal commitment and ability to communicate than to academic degrees or personal life history. Some of the ministers who have been quite effective in their individual churches and in their published works have not had all the academic credentials that past generations of church fathers have been expected to have. The emphasis will be more on ability to establish trust and to communicate hope than it has been in the past. I believe there is also a mood away from the leader who is primarily concerned with reputation and administration (e.g. building programs) to those persons who are able to relate easily and directly to others and who have a sense of the presence of God. This new style of leader is quite in contrast to the austere scholar-prophets of past generations. There is a pull toward the kind of leadership which Jesus provided for his men as one who walks and talks their language in a loving, perceptive, helpful, encouraging-the-best-in-you manner. There is a hunger for direct talk, honest wrestling with the main issues in life. There is a concern for what is real and lasting in a world which changes overnight.

Not all city churches can, should, or will become filled with the kind of new understanding of hope which I have advocated in this paper. Not all will become motivated to become the witness which is so desperately needed in our cities. There is a continuing need to work with educational structures, fellowship groups, biblical preaching and relational communication methods.

SPIRITUAL BASE

The new model for a city church must have an acknowledged spiritual and Christian base. It must provide strong learning and experiential situations which continue to deepen its members' personal relationship with God and each other. It must be a channel for God's creative interaction with man. It must be one which renews the hope, faith and dignity (the innate worth) of all God's creation. It must be able to create and sustain a sense of community in the midst of a city by giving a sense of purpose and worth through the utilization of particular gifts and the sharing of inspiration and hope which sees beyond the years. This hope is renewed and strengthened each time we experience God working in our own lives both through outer circumstances and through inner revelations. This hope is renewed each time our experience of God's fulfillment of His promises to us agrees with the

experience of others whom we know, or who are known to us through their spoken or written words or actions. This hope toward the continuing expression of God's love and power is proved valid especially through the record of His actions in the past in the Bible and specifically His power over death and despair evidenced in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. A radically new understanding of this Event which includes knowledge about, experience of, and faith in this expression of God's love and power brings with it a strong, vibrant, lasting hope in the future. It can bring new hope to see beyond the present conditions of a declining city church. It can bring a new future to the city church, for it is not dependent upon transitory changes around or within their local situation but instead upon the limitless and eternal nature of God Himself, who has been shown to be faithful through man's experience of Him in history and in personal experience.

CONCLUSION

We are called to be God's people wherever we are. He is the Lord of the city as well as the country. If we know, experience and live by the hope which is grounded in His everlasting love and power then we can look forward confidently to the fulfilling of life with a joyous faith in the future.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the glorious things which God hath prepared for those who love him." (I Cor. 2:9).

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APPENDIX A

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: H.C.C. Officers, Boards, Committees, and Associations

FROM: The H.C.C. Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Five Year Plan

The Hollywood Congregational Church Planning Committee is beginning a project to develop a Five Year Plan for the church. The plan will be developed by each church office, board, committee and association formulating their individual plans, followed by the Planning Committee consolidating the individual plans into a recommended master plan for the church. The Church Council and finally the membership will amend and approve the plan.

Attached is a questionnaire that is to be used to guide your organization in formulating its five year plan. Because the areas being planned are heterogeneous, it is not feasible to use a very specific questionnaire that will be suitable for all. Therefore, the questionnaire you are asked to use contains a very few broad questions. Please make your answers clear and specific about your area and feel free to supply such additional information as is relevant for your organization.

Included in the attached material is a general statement of the purpose of the church, developed by the Planning Committee and its advisors, and the general goals of the church which were developed by members of the church three years ago. These broad goals should give general direction to your planning, but should not restrict it, for these goals can be expanded or modified as a result of this project. In general though, the activities and goals of the church organizations should be directed towards meeting a part or all of some broad goals of the church.

The attached descriptions of some of the church organizations can serve as a reference for stating the purpose and functions of those organizations in Section I of the questionnaire. This material is quite old and in some cases in great need of updating. This update should result from this planning effort.

Also attached for your reference are projections for the Hollywood area provided by the Chamber of Commerce,

which should be considered in developing plans to serve the community. The general makeup of the membership of the Hollywood Congregational Church have been provided in a statistical summary for your consideration.

The church must have a master plan that will direct it in its efforts to best serve the membership and the community. A plan for each of the church organizations is primary to successful programs. Please work together with God's help in a serious effort to formulate your plan. It is the recommendation of the Planning Committee that resource allocations tend to favor those organizations who produce a viable Five Year Plan. What this means, is that those organizations producing timely plans for a sound program will receive the greatest priority for funds.

The organization plans should be submitted to the Church Council at its October 1974 meeting.

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND GOALS

Purpose:

The purpose of the Hollywood Congregational Church is to be a worshipping body of individuals, to serve the community spiritually, to reach out to others in God's love, and to know our role as God's people in the world today.

Broad Goals:

1. To be a fellowship which expresses its caring for one another and the people of the world.
2. To develop spiritual growth in all members of the church and to take the initiative in welcoming all those who are seeking God and who come to us to find Him.
3. To provide a continuing environment to learn about and experience our religion.
4. To provide relevancy to living as God's people in our age.
5. To influence the community around us.

5 Year Planning Committee
Jim Case, Chairman
August, 1974

SOME THOUGHTS ON
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

- I. The purpose of a Church is
 - A. to build up each person
 - 1. to develop that of God within each one
 - 2. to provide a basis for believing
 - 3. to provide a channel for putting beliefs into action
 - B. to accentuate the positive
 - 1. understanding what you believe--and why
 - 2. understanding what the other person believes--and why
 - 3. understanding what God wants to have happen
 - a. How?
 - prayer
 - other persons whom you respect and in whom you believe
 - comparing other situations, how were they handled and results
 - asking, "What would Jesus do if he were in this situation?"
 - intelligent thinking
 - b. Act on basis of your very best understanding
 - c. Look for positive results--be optimistic
 - d. Remember: God wants what is best for you

C. Educate the negative

1. smother it with T.L.C. (tender, loving care)
2. essential courage of our conviction
3. essential fellowship of like-minded persons striving to live up to the highest that they know too--mutual support to be better persons
4. cheerfully willing to pay price to give an example of why someone else should believe as you believe

D. A Congregational Church is a group of persons banded together to encourage each other to realize their highest potential.

1. Organized and having control over all their activities so that they can reflect Christian values and expressions appropriate to their particular setting.
2. Full and ultimate authority rests in the membership.
3. Partial authority and responsibility delegated to various boards and committees for handling of practical mechanics of programming, etc.

Question: How can we get our Church to fulfill more of these basic needs of its members?

David L. Gray
June, 1971

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

A Way to Get There!!

- I. Mission of the organization (office, board, committee or association).
 - A. Broad Goals: Please provide a concise statement of the goals of your organization and define its function within the church. How should these goals be changed or expanded in the future?
 - B. Scope of Activities: What are the specific responsibilities of your organization and what services are performed for the church and its members, friends, and/or community?
 - C. Describe the structure of your organization.
- II. Present status of the organization.
 - A. What are the strongest or most effective elements of your organization? What is the basis for your evaluation?
 - B. What existing elements of your organization detract from or weaken your total program? If abandoned, what would be the consequences to the church?
 - C. What efforts are currently under way to improve your services?
- III. Five Year Plan for the organization:
 - A. What changes do you plan in your program in the next year, two years, and five years?
 - 1. What changes in facilities or budget support would be needed to implement these changes?
 - 2. Would there need to be organizational changes and what might they be?
 - 3. What else would be needed to achieve future goals?

- B. What changes do you foresee in the next year, two years, and five years which will affect your organization and how do you plan to adjust to these changes?
1. What effects do you foresee as a result of new regulations by the Church Council and/or legislation of the state and federal governments?
 2. What effects do you foresee as a result of technological and planned community changes?
 3. What effects do you foresee as a result of such social changes as shifting population, changing values, changes in income level, increased maintenance and depreciation costs, etc.? Consider the need for relocation of the church or a new structure such as a highrise building.
- C. Changing level of support
1. During the next fiscal year, if your fiscal resources were increased by twenty percent what improvements or alterations would be made in your projected plan?
 2. If, during the next fiscal year your fiscal resources should have to be cut by twenty percent, what alterations or deletions would your projected plan suffer?

5 Year Planning Committee
Jim Case, Chairman
August, 1974

H. C. C. FIVE YEAR PLAN
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

<u>TASK</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>SCHEDULE</u>
1. Form Planning Committee	Jim Case	8/4-8/10
2. Obtain concurrence of the purpose of the church among the committee (broad goals)	Planning Committee	8/11-8/17
3. Develop planning method	Planning Committee	8/11-8/17
4. Notify membership of project	Minister	8/11-8/17
5. Gather membership and community statistics	Minister and staff	8/11-8/24
6. Present planning method to the Church Council	Planning Committee	8/18-8/24
7. Council approval of the methodology	Church Council	8/25
8. Initiate plan development in the Church organizations	Planning Committee	8/25-8/31
9. Develop organization plans	Church Organizations	9/1-10/26
10. Present plans to Planning Committee	Church Organizations	10/27-11/9
11. Develop Church Master Plan	Planning Committee	11/10-1/4
12. Present Master Plan to the Church Council	Planning Committee	1/5-1/11
13. Approval of Master Plan by the Church Council	Church Council	1/12
14. Present Master Plan to Church Membership	Planning Committee	1/12-1/25

<u>TASK</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>SCHEDULE</u>
15. Approval of Master Plan by Church Membership	Membership	1/26

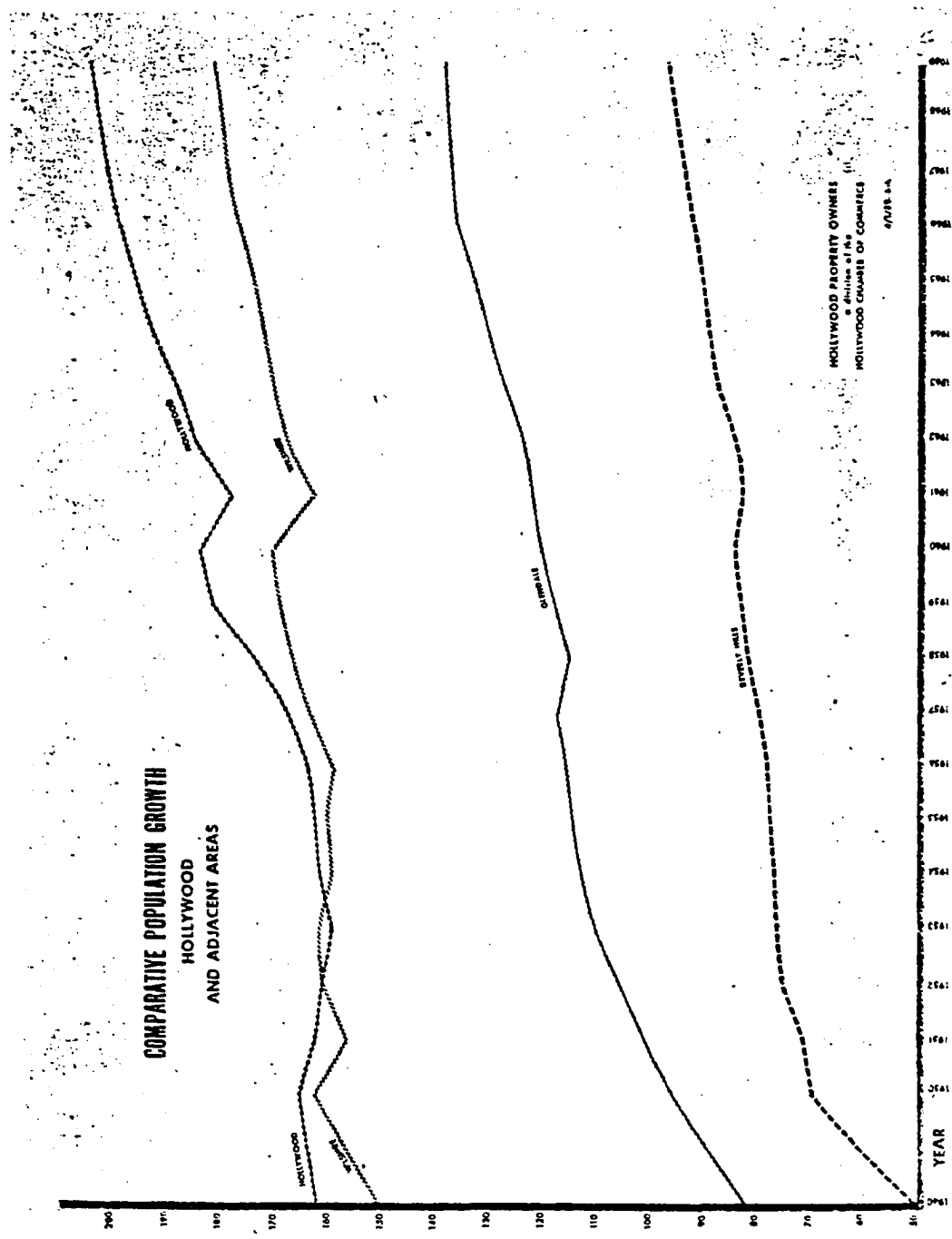
5 Year Planning Committee
Jim Case, Chairman
August, 1974

HOLLYWOOD'S POPULATION*

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>INHABITANTS</u>	<u>HOUSING UNITS</u>	<u>PER UNIT</u>
1950	165,501	70,788	2.34
1951	162,348	71,844	2.26
1952	161,264	72,819	2.22
1953	159,077	73,862	2.15
1954	161,651	76,389	2.11
1955	162,270	77,078	2.10
1956	163,476	79,170	2.06
1957	167,845	82,014	2.05
1958	173,718	85,215	2.04
1959	181,043	89,737	2.02
1960	183,519	92,099	1.99
1961	177,778	94,059	1.88
1962	184,455	96,169	1.92
1963	187,891	98,829	1.90
1964	192,441	102,566	1.87
1965	195,328	106,122	1.84
1966	198,481	108,811	1.83
1967	200,520	110,107	1.82
1968	202,329	110,695	1.83
1969	203,932	111,418	1.83
1970	364,808	202,574	1.80
**JULY 1, 1973	367,085	208,897	1.76

*Figures as of First of January of year indicated

**Figure projected from 1970



HOUSING									
MEDIAN MONTHLY RENT BY TYPE OF HOUSING - 1960									
YEAR	TOTAL	POPULATION		UNDER 18		MEDIAN AGE		OVER 65	
		MALE	FEMALE	19	18	M	F	25-64	65+
1960	4,453	1,633	2,760	605	44.8	49.6	79.6	187	2,262
1961	5,091	1,871	3,240	809	45.6	51.2	79.9	209	2,486
1962	5,635	2,071	3,564	884	46.4	52.0	80.3	238	2,797
1963	6,093	2,301	3,792	956	47.2	52.8	81.1	266	3,027
1964	6,541	2,531	4,010	1,028	48.0	53.6	81.9	294	3,247
1965	6,989	2,761	4,228	1,100	48.8	54.4	82.7	322	3,467
1966	7,437	2,991	4,446	1,172	49.6	55.2	83.5	350	3,687
1967	7,885	3,221	4,664	1,244	50.4	56.0	84.3	378	3,907
1968	8,333	3,451	4,882	1,316	51.2	56.8	85.1	406	4,127
1969	8,781	3,681	5,100	1,388	52.0	57.6	85.9	434	4,347
1970	9,229	3,911	5,318	1,460	52.8	58.4	86.7	462	4,567
1971	9,677	4,141	5,536	1,532	53.6	59.2	87.5	490	4,787
1972	10,125	4,371	5,754	1,604	54.4	60.0	88.3	518	5,007
1973	10,573	4,601	5,972	1,676	55.2	60.8	89.1	546	5,227
1974	11,021	4,831	6,190	1,748	56.0	61.6	89.9	574	5,447
1975	11,469	5,061	6,408	1,820	56.8	62.4	90.7	602	5,667
1976	11,917	5,291	6,626	1,892	57.6	63.2	91.5	630	5,887
1977	12,365	5,521	6,844	1,964	58.4	64.0	92.3	658	6,107
1978	12,813	5,751	7,062	2,036	59.2	64.8	93.1	686	6,327
1979	13,261	5,981	7,280	2,108	60.0	65.6	93.9	714	6,547
1980	13,709	6,211	7,498	2,180	60.8	66.4	94.7	742	6,767
1981	14,157	6,441	7,716	2,252	61.6	67.2	95.5	770	6,987
1982	14,605	6,671	7,934	2,324	62.4	68.0	96.3	798	7,207
1983	15,053	6,901	8,152	2,396	63.2	68.8	97.1	826	7,427
1984	15,501	7,131	8,369	2,468	64.0	69.6	97.9	854	7,647
1985	15,949	7,361	8,587	2,540	64.8	70.4	98.7	882	7,867
1986	16,397	7,591	8,805	2,612	65.6	71.2	99.5	910	8,087
1987	16,845	7,821	9,023	2,684	66.4	72.0	100.3	938	8,307
1988	17,293	8,051	9,241	2,756	67.2	72.8	101.1	966	8,527
1989	17,741	8,281	9,459	2,828	68.0	73.6	101.9	994	8,747
1990	18,189	8,511	9,677	2,900	68.8	74.4	102.7	1,022	8,967
1991	18,637	8,741	9,895	2,972	69.6	75.2	103.5	1,050	9,187
1992	19,085	8,971	10,113	3,044	70.4	76.0	104.3	1,078	9,407
1993	19,533	9,201	10,331	3,116	71.2	76.8	105.1	1,106	9,627
1994	19,981	9,431	10,549	3,188	72.0	77.6	105.9	1,134	9,847
1995	20,429	9,661	10,767	3,260	72.8	78.4	106.7	1,162	10,067
1996	20,877	9,891	10,985	3,332	73.6	79.2	107.5	1,190	10,287
1997	21,325	10,121	11,203	3,404	74.4	80.0	108.3	1,218	10,507
1998	21,773	10,351	11,421	3,476	75.2	80.8	109.1	1,246	10,727
1999	22,221	10,581	11,639	3,548	76.0	81.6	109.9	1,274	10,947
2000	22,669	10,811	11,857	3,620	76.8	82.4	110.7	1,302	11,167
2001	23,117	11,041	12,075	3,692	77.6	83.2	111.5	1,330	11,387
2002	23,565	11,271	12,293	3,764	78.4	84.0	112.3	1,358	11,607
2003	24,013	11,501	12,511	3,836	79.2	84.8	113.1	1,386	11,827
2004	24,461	11,731	12,729	3,908	80.0	85.6	113.9	1,414	12,047
2005	24,909	11,961	12,947	3,980	80.8	86.4	114.7	1,442	12,267
2006	25,357	12,191	13,165	4,052	81.6	87.2	115.5	1,470	12,487
2007	25,805	12,421	13,383	4,124	82.4	88.0	116.3	1,498	12,707
2008	26,253	12,651	13,601	4,196	83.2	88.8	117.1	1,526	12,927
2009	26,701	12,881	13,819	4,268	84.0	89.6	117.9	1,554	13,147
2010	27,149	13,111	14,037	4,340	84.8	90.4	118.7	1,582	13,367
2011	27,597	13,341	14,255	4,412	85.6	91.2	119.5	1,610	13,587
2012	28,045	13,571	14,473	4,484	86.4	92.0	120.3	1,638	13,807
2013	28,493	13,801	14,691	4,556	87.2	92.8	121.1	1,666	14,027
2014	28,941	14,031	14,909	4,628	88.0	93.6	121.9	1,694	14,247
2015	29,389	14,261	15,127	4,700	88.8	94.4	122.7	1,722	14,467
2016	29,837	14,491	15,345	4,772	89.6	95.2	123.5	1,750	14,687
2017	30,285	14,721	15,563	4,844	90.4	96.0	124.3	1,778	14,907
2018	30,733	14,951	15,781	4,916	91.2	96.8	125.1	1,806	15,127
2019	31,181	15,181	16,000	4,988	92.0	97.6	125.9	1,834	15,347
2020	31,629	15,411	16,217	5,060	92.8	98.4	126.7	1,862	15,567
2021	32,077	15,641	16,435	5,132	93.6	99.2	127.5	1,890	15,787
2022	32,525	15,871	16,653	5,204	94.4	100.0	128.3	1,918	16,007
2023	32,973	16,101	16,871	5,276	95.2	100.8	129.1	1,946	16,227
2024	33,421	16,331	17,089	5,348	96.0	101.6	130.0	1,974	16,447
2025	33,869	16,561	17,307	5,420	96.8	102.4	130.8	2,002	16,667
2026	34,317	16,791	17,525	5,492	97.6	103.2	131.6	2,030	16,887
2027	34,765	17,021	17,743	5,564	98.4	104.0	132.4	2,058	17,107
2028	35,213	17,251	17,961	5,636	99.2	104.8	133.2	2,086	17,327
2029	35,661	17,481	18,179	5,708	100.0	105.6	134.0	2,114	17,547
2030	36,109	17,711	18,397	5,780	100.8	106.4	134.8	2,142	17,767
2031	36,557	17,941	18,615	5,852	101.6	107.2	135.6	2,170	17,987
2032	37,005	18,171	18,833	5,924	102.4	108.0	136.4	2,198	18,207
2033	37,453	18,401	19,051	5,996	103.2	108.8	137.2	2,226	18,427
2034	37,901	18,631	19,269	6,068	104.0	109.6	138.0	2,254	18,647
2035	38,349	18,861	19,487	6,140	104.8	110.4	138.8	2,282	18,867
2036	38,797	19,091	19,705	6,212	105.6	111.2	139.6	2,310	19,087
2037	39,245	19,321	19,923	6,284	106.4	112.0	140.4	2,338	19,307
2038	39,693	19,551	20,141	6,356	107.2	112.8	141.2	2,366	19,527
2039	40,141	19,781	20,359	6,428	108.0	113.6	142.0	2,394	19,747
2040	40,589	20,011	20,577	6,500	108.8	114.4	142.8	2,422	19,967
2041	41,037	20,241	20,795	6,572	109.6	115.2	143.6	2,450	20,187
2042	41,485	20,471	21,013	6,644	110.4	116.0	144.4	2,478	20,407
2043	41,933	20,701	21,231	6,716	111.2	116.8	145.2	2,506	20,627
2044	42,381	20,931	21,449	6,788	112.0	117.6	146.0	2,534	20,847
2045	42,829	21,161	21,667	6,860	112.8	118.4	146.8	2,562	21,067
2046	43,277	21,391	21,885	6,932	113.6	119.2	147.6	2,590	21,287
2047	43,725	21,621	22,103	7,004	114.4	120.0	148.4	2,618	21,507
2048	44,173	21,851	22,321	7,076	115.2	120.8	149.2	2,646	21,727
2049	44,621	22,081	22,539	7,148	116.0	121.6	150.0	2,674	21,947
2050	45,069	22,311	22,757	7,220	116.8	122.4	150.8	2,702	22,167
2051	45,517	22,541	22,975	7,292	117.6	123.2	151.6	2,730	22,387
2052	45,965	22,771	23,193	7,364	118.4	124.0	152.4	2,758	22,607
2053	46,413	23,001	23,411	7,436	119.2	124.8	153.2	2,786	22,827
2054	46,861	23,231	23,629	7,508	120.0	125.6	154.0	2,814	23,047
2055	47,309	23,461	23,847	7,580	120.8	126.4	154.8	2,842	23,267
2056	47,757	23,691	24,065	7,652	121.6	127.2	155.6	2,870	23,487
2057	48,205	23,921	24,283	7,724	122.4	128.0	156.4	2,898	23,707
2058	48,653	24,151	24,501	7,796	123.2	128.8	157.2	2,926	23,927
2059	49,101	24,381	24,719	7,868	124.0	129.6	158.0	2,954	24,147
2060	49,549	24,611	24,937	7,940	124.8	130.4	158.8	2,982	24,367
2061	50,000	24,841	25,158	8,012	125.6	131.2	159.6	3,010	24,587
2062	50,450	25,071	25,379	8,084	126.4	132.0	160.4	3,038	24,807
2063	50,900	25,301	25,599	8,156	127.2	132.8	161.2	3,066	

TOURIST TRADE EXPANDS.

1950	1,890,285
1951	2,375,125
1952	2,828,050
1953	3,035,307
1954	2,989,410
1955	3,330,330
1956	3,496,759
1957	3,698,326
1958	3,707,243
1959	3,917,508
1960	4,180,045
1961	4,373,103
1962	4,876,643
1963	5,296,736
1973	8,000,446
1976	9,548,320

APPENDIX B

To: Church Council

From: Planning Committee

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

MASTER PLAN

D R A F T

Subject: Enclosed is a draft of the Hollywood Congregational Church Master Plan for your review. Your comments, corrections and additions will be requested at our next Council meeting. Please review the Master Plan draft prior to the meeting.

January 12, 1975

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	104
A Church to Work, Worship and Serve	105
Hollywood Congregational Church Background	105
Statement of Purpose and Goals	110
Summary of Master Plan Programs	110
Description of Master Plan Programs	112
 Appendix A - Planning Committee Members	 141

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH MASTER PLAN PROGRAMS

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the programs to be included in the Hollywood Congregational Church Master Plan. This report will also serve as a working document for measuring progress in achieving the objectives of programs outlined and will continually be updated with new programs and changes to existing ones. Many of the programs outlined are described in general terms and as time progresses must be made more specific to include dates, costs and specific objectives. This information must be added before this document can be considered a real master plan.

The material included was compiled by the Hollywood Congregational Church Planning Committee. The Planning Committee was established in August, 1974 to formulate a Master plan for our church, to continually review and update the Master Plan, and to periodically review and report the progress being made on the plan's objectives to the congregation. See Appendix A for the Planning Committee organization. The decision to form such a committee and undertake this planning effort resulted from an awareness of changes in our church membership and the immediate community. These have caused serious questions to arise dealing with the future of our church and its facilities. To answer these questions and make required decisions, a master plan is needed.

The method employed in developing the Master Plan programs was for each church organization and officer of the church to develop a five year plan for their function. These organization plans were used as a basis for developing the Master Plan programs. Appendix B offers more detail on the development of the plan. Appendix C contains the five year plans developed by the church organizations.

The church membership must review these programs and make their additions and comments. Your determination of the goals and objectives to be pursued for the next two years is required prior to completing the plans in terms of time and cost. In the achievement of your goals lies the future of your church.

A Church to Work, Worship and Serve Together

The Hollywood Congregational Church is an association of men and women who, through the years, have sought inspiration and guidance from God as revealed through the life of Jesus Christ and the inner personal experience of the Holy Spirit.

We are a "fellowship of men and women, united by the acceptance of the following mutual covenant:

"Believing in God as interpreted by Jesus Christ, we accept his teachings as the guiding principles of our lives, and consecrate ourselves and our Church to their fulfillment.

"We therefore covenant, one with another, in the presence of God, to work, worship and serve Him together that we may express, through our Church and our individual lives, the love and faith taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ."

A Congregational Christian Church is responsible directly to God for its life and witness. No higher organization or judicatory exists which can order its worship, determine its minister or require its support of mission projects. Each member is responsible to God for his life, faith and work.

Hollywood Congregational Church Background

The Hollywood Congregational Church is a contemporary church which is proud of its heritage. Founded in 1914 by Dr. Carter it grew until in 1917 Dr. James Hamilton Lash came as a young man. Under his spiritual guidance the fellowship flourished. Strong, graceful buildings were built to house the expanding program. A sanctuary, classrooms, reception room and dining room were completed.

In 1935, Pilgrim Hall was dedicated with an entire stage, gymnasium-auditorium complete with showers, locker rooms, kitchenette and classrooms. Office buildings and the beautiful Lash Wedding Chapel, dedicated the year Dr. Lash retired in 1948 completed the physical facilities. During these years this Church grew to over 1,000 members and enjoyed a well earned and widely known reputation for its Christian work and witness in the heart of Hollywood.

During the ensuing years a number of Ministers served for varying lengths of time including the Rev. Walter A. Mueller (1949-1953), The Rev. Whitmore E.

Beardsley (1954-1958), Dr. Merle E. Fish (1959-1967) and The Rev. John W. Messer (1968-1970). These were years of transition in the life of the Church. They were also years of change for the community. Many families moved away to the San Fernando Valley. Members found it difficult to relate to so many different ministers after loving one for so many years. The gap between the requirements and expectations of the older members and the claims for faster change to appeal to the youth in the area caused increased tension within the membership. The combination of these factors resulted in a significant reduction of membership from over 1,000 in 1948 to just over 200 presently.

Dr. Henry David Gray who returned to California to retire, served diligently as interim minister from January to August, 1971. On December 5, 1971, we formally installed the Reverend David L. Gray as our minister. He was ordained in 1963 and brought with him his young family and deep dedication to overcome the spiritual and physical challenges which we faced.

Renewal began in vital worship experiences, renewed study of the scriptures, neighborhood study groups and productive Council and Trustees meetings. Major building repairs were undertaken and have continued over the past two years under the guidance of the Trustees. Prayer and hard work combined with members giving generously of their time, energy and money extended the major work on the Tower and Pilgrim Hall to improvements in nearly every room and building in the complex.

Today a fully licensed Preschool-Nursery has been founded, youth groups are active, a center for continuing study and service has been incorporated which will be housed in the newly redone classrooms in Pilgrim Hall, the first overseas scholar and family from Athens, Greece, came to live with us here in Hollywood and we began training laymen and ministers not only for the present but also for the future. In the past year the Church acquired a mini bus to serve participants in the Church functions.

Figures 1 and 2 show graphically some statistics compiled for the past 20 years which may be of value to the reader when analyzing the programs and their priorities. Figure 1 shows the actual pledges paid and the loose offering collected for each year from 1960 to 1973. Figure 2 displays the greatest Sunday attendance for each year (typically Easter Sunday), the lowest Sunday attendance for each year (typically a rainy day during the peak vacation period) and the median Sunday attendance for each year (a typical Sunday attendance). Also included in Figure 2 is

the recorded membership by year. The large drop in 1972 is a result of an all church canvass made that year to establish the actual active membership. The reliability of the preceding year figures might be questioned. The correlation of pledges to membership is much less than one might expect, where it is much more significant between attendance and loose offerings. If we look at the decline in membership from 1959 to 1973 and compare it to the much more gradual decline in Sunday attendance, we might conclude that the remaining membership is a more dedicated one. During the same period, pledges have increased slightly, but in no way comparable to costs. The decrease in membership, therefore, results in a much lower effective income. The maintenance of the dollar amount over this period indicates further a dedicated membership, willing to increase their financial commitment to keep their church alive.

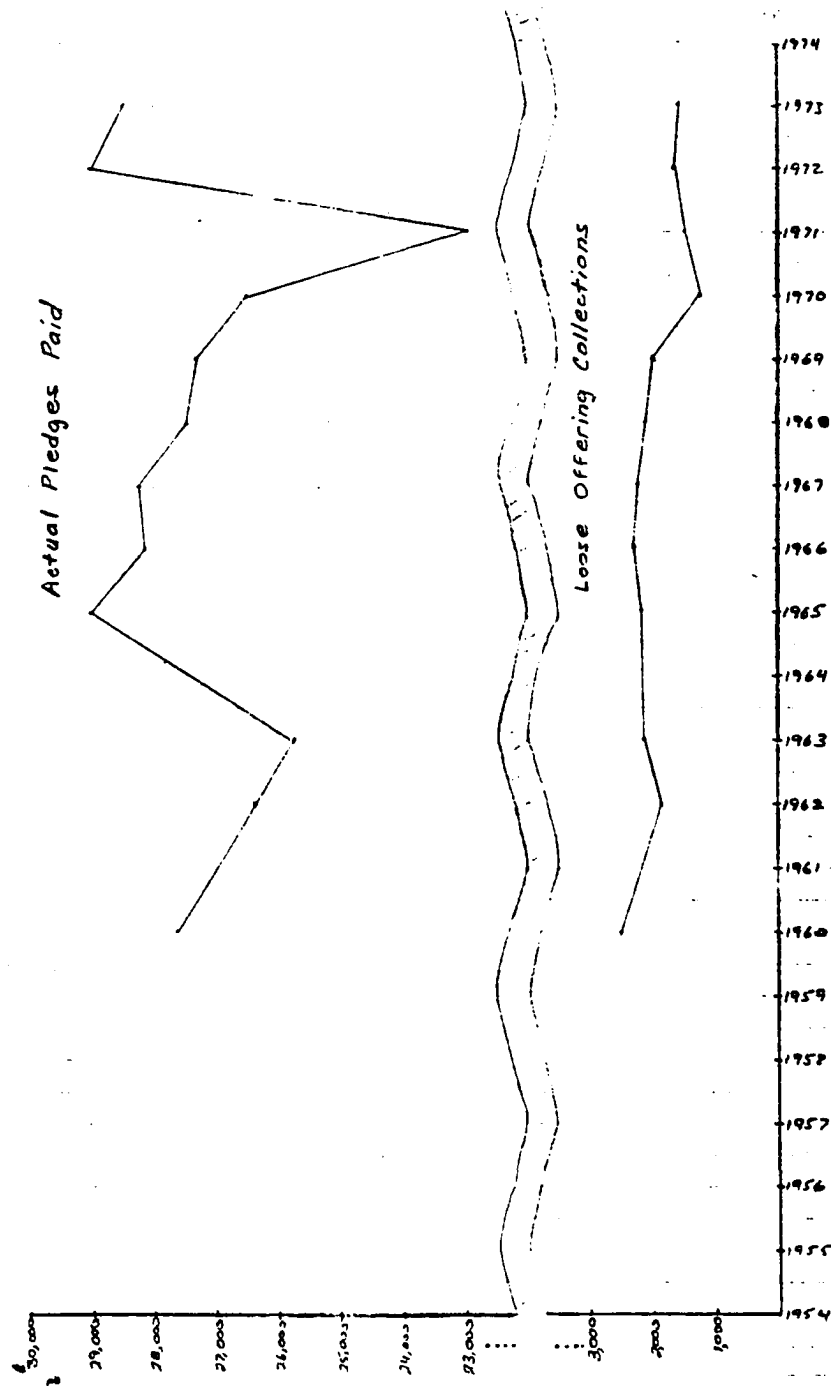
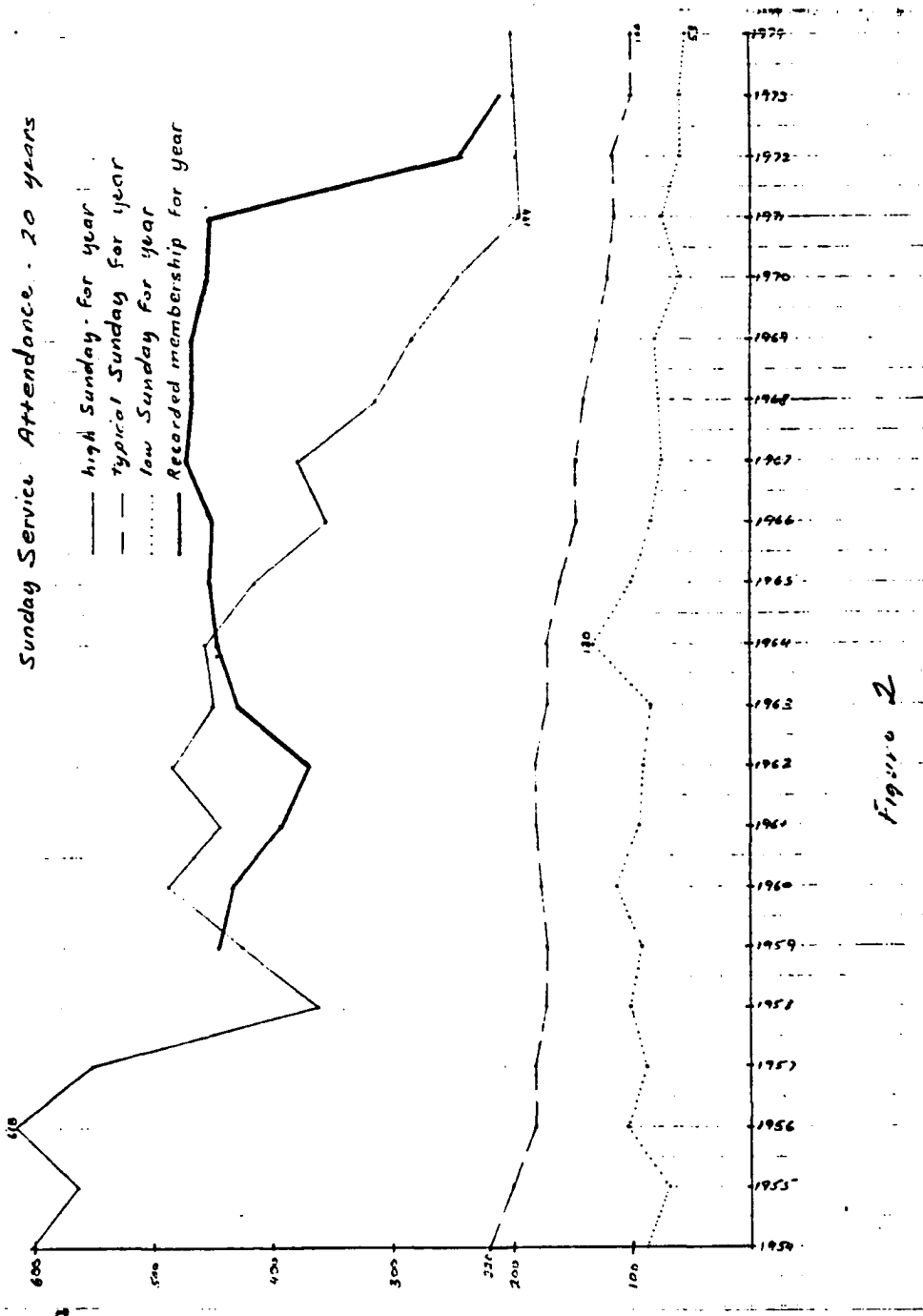


Figure 1



Statement of Purpose and Goals

A statement of the purpose and goals of our church follows. These were developed by the planning committee using results of earlier efforts with some refinement. They were reviewed by the Church Council which offered no objection to them. The Church organizations were asked to use these goals as a guide to developing their programs, and to suggest changes or additions to them. No such changes or additions have been received to date.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Hollywood Congregational Church is to be a worshipping body of individuals, to serve the community spiritually, to reach out to others in God's love, and to know our role as God's people in the world today.

Broad Goals:

1. To be a fellowship which expresses its caring for one another and the people of the world.
2. To develop spiritual growth in all members of the church and to take the initiative in welcoming all those who are seeking God and who come to us to find Him.
3. To provide a continuing environment to learn about and experience our religion.
4. To provide relevancy to living as God's people in our age.
5. To influence the community around us.

These goals were developed in August, 1974.

Summary of Master Plan Programs

This summary of the programs is divided into five sections:

1. First priority programs dealing with membership.
2. First priority programs dealing with facilities.
3. Other first priority programs.
4. Second through fifth priority programs.

5. Programs already initiated.

The reason for this organization is to list programs in order of priority for resources due to their urgency. The format is such that additions and status reports can be appended.

First Priority Programs
Membership

Of primary concern to each church organization was the declining membership of our church. The impact of this observation on the longevity of our church is not positive. As seen earlier, the funds required to run the church are dependent in a large part on membership as well as the survival of certain church organizations. The following programs therefore have been assigned a high priority because of their potential for supplying new dedicated members.

U.C.C. 5 YEAR PLANNING COMMITTEE

Year	Program and Activities	Prior. **	Goal * Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership	Constitutional Change Required
	Increase Membership	1	1,2,3,5				Deacons Deaconesses	
	Mid Week Service	1	2,3			?	Deacons	
	Apartment Ministry	1	1,3,5				Minister	
	Agreement on Goals	1	1,2,3,4,5				Planning Committee	
	Increase Sunday School	1	1,2,3,4,5				Christian Educ. Comm.	

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevance 5. Influence Community
 ** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, ☒ already begun, ☐ decision needed rather than action

First Priority Programs Facilities

A second set of programs deserving high priority deal with our present facilities. There are certain aspects of our facility that are possibly in critical need of repair, some to the degree that their present condition is considered dangerous. Though these programs have the same high priority as others, they do not necessarily conflict with them in terms of resources and effort required.

H. J. C. 5 YEAR TRAINING COMMITTEE							
Year	Program and Activities	Priority **	Goal # Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership
	Termite Inspection	①	3			?	House & Grounds
	Inspection of Stained Glass Windows	①	3			?	House & Grounds

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevancy 5. Influence Community
** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, ✓ already begun, ○ decision needed rather than action

First Priority Programs
Others

Listed here are other programs deserving the same high priority attention that do not fall into categories described previously. They generally center around spiritual development and business related programs. Here again there is not necessarily conflict for resources.

H.C.C. 5 YEAR PLANNING COMMITTEE							
Year	Program and Activities	Prior**	Goal * Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership Constitutional Change Required
	Deepen & strengthen spiritual life workshops conferences retreats small groups		1,2,4			?	Deacons & Deaconesses
	Study Centralized Finance	①	3,5		Education of organizations re policy		Treasurer
	Fiscal Policy Study	①	3				Trustees
	Change Fiscal Year - Study	①	1,3				Council
	Annual Budget for Choir Section Leaders	1	2,3			\$1,000/yr	Music Committee

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevancy 5. Influence Community
 ** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, ✓ already begun, ○ decision needed rather than action

Second - Fifth Priority Programs

These Programs are listed in sequence of those of highest priority (2) to those of lowest priority (5). The lower priority assigned to a program is not meant to preclude it from early initiation if the resources and energies are available and will not detract from higher priority program implementation.

H.C.C. 5 YEAR PLANNING COMMITTEE

Year	Program and Activities	Priority	Goal * Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership	Constitutional Change Required
	Replace Heaters	2	3			\$6,000	House & Grounds	
	Men's Club	2	1,2,4		Begin with deacons	self- support	Deacons	
	Bible Study at Board Meetings	2	2,4				Minister	
	Ushers for Ser- vice	2	2,3				Deacons	
	Study Location/ Rebuild/Renovate	2	3				Planning Committee	
	Adjust Salaries	2	3,5			?	Personnel	
	Up to date birth- day list	2	1				Clerk	
	Circle for Young Women	3	1,2,3				Women's Assoc.	
	Expand Nursery School	3	1,3,5				Nursery Sch. Bd.	
	Minister's Par- ticipation in Seminars & Work- shops	3	2,3,4,5			?	Council	
	List of Church Archives	3	1,3,5				Clerk	

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevancy 5. Influence Community
 ** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, ☒ already begun, ☐ decision needed rather than action

H. C. C. 5 YEAR PLANNING COMMITTEE

Year	Program and Activities	Priority	Goal * Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership	Constitutional Change Required
	Christian Parent Education	3	2				Christian Education	
	Develop Library	4	2, 5			?	Christian Education	
	Publish Choir Director's Music	4	2, 3, 5			\$200-600	Music Committee	
	Full day Nursery School	5	1, 3, 5				Nursery Sch. Bd.	
	Air Condition Kitchen	5	3			?	House & Grounds	

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevancy 5. Influence Community
 ** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, *already begun, o decision needed rather than action

Currently Initiated Programs

These are programs of varying priorities that have been recently initiated due to special needs or desires and where energies and resources were made available. The continuance of these efforts is supported by the plans of church organizations and officers.

U. S. S. V. YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Year	Program and Activities	Prior. *	Goal * Commitment	Facility Needs	Organizational Needs	Funds Required	Leadership	Constitutional Change Required
	Study Parking Problem		3			?	House & Grounds Council	
	Update Constitution		3					
	Deacons Fund		1,2,4,5		\$200	Raise 1 by Deacons	Deacons	
	Fulltime Custodian		2,3,5			?	Personnel	
	Community Improvement Programs Missions Christian films		2,3,4,5				Council	
	Bell Choir		1,3,5			?	Music Committee	
	Landscape Patio		2,3			?	Women's Assoc. & House & Grounds	

* 1. Caring Fellowship 2. Spiritual Growth 3. Continuing Environment 4. Relevancy 5. Influence Community
 ** Priority - Level of urgency: 1 = High ... 5 = low, ✓ already begun, ○ decision needed rather than action

Description of Master Plan Programs

Included in this section are descriptions of those programs summarized in the previous section. The program descriptions are listed in the same order as they appeared in the summary. The format of this section is such that projects may be added in a consistent sequence and so that program status reports may be appended to the program priority sections. The priority sections are:

1. First Priority - membership
2. First Priority - facilities
3. First Priority - other
4. Second Priority Programs
5. Third Priority Programs
6. Fourth Priority Programs
7. Fifth Priority Programs
8. Currently Initiated Programs

First Priority Programs Membership

Increase Membership

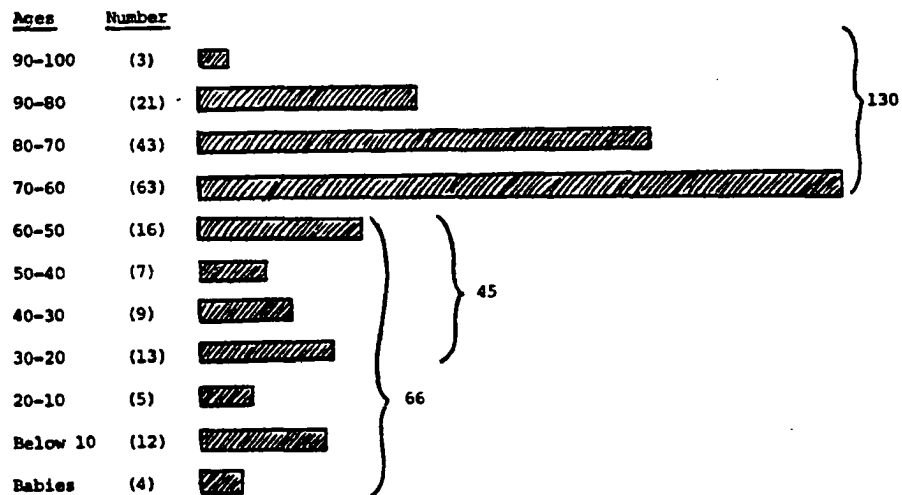
The program that is of greatest importance, and requires the highest priority in this church is to bring in new members who indicate a commitment to the covenant of our church. The purpose of this program is not primarily to increase the size of the membership but to at least maintain the current level of dedicated members and hopefully experience growth. This program is necessary for the survival of this church in its present location. The pledges of the membership are required to support the facility and services that the members of this church are used to. Should the ability of the membership to contribute at the current rate decline (because of lower effective incomes), then we must experience growth in membership to compensate. There is strong evidence that this may be the case.

This program must be given top priority by all the church organizations. During 1975 all must attract new people through their activities and show them that our church is a caring fellowship that will also meet their spiritual needs. The individual member units must also expend an effort to bring a friend. Our goal is that each member unit introduce a new family to the church in 1975, thus providing the potential of doubling our membership.

As clearly indicated by the following graph, Figure 3, the age categories of our membership requires balancing. This is important to the future leadership and survival of our church.

This program is relevant to all the stated goals of the church in that it provides for a caring fellowship, develops spiritual growth in the members and others seeking it, is essential to providing a continuing environment for our religious expression and training, it provides us with a purpose as God's people, and is a vehicle for influencing the community. Should we experience significant growth, we must seek solutions to our already troubled parking problems. Since the availability of additional funds in 1975 is not likely, it will be necessary to make the best possible use of our existing advertising funds for this program. Responsibility for this program is with every church organization and member. Leadership should come from the deacons and deaconesses. A special emphasis must be put on this program in 1975, however it must be a continuing effort.

HOLLYWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
ESTIMATED ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP



Mid Week Services

This program is to establish a mid week service to provide the members and residents in the community with an opportunity for prayer and meditation at some time between the Sunday worship services. There is evidence that many of the apartment residents in the surrounding community find that they have idle time. This program can offer worthwhile activity to those people. Should mid week services be held during the noon hour, it has the potential for also attracting businessmen from the office buildings in the area. It might be expected that this program will attract new individuals to the church, thus may enhance our primary program for increasing membership. This program therefore should receive high priority in 1975 as a part of that effort.

This program is consistent with all the church goals with special emphasis on developing spiritual growth in members and others and providing a continuing environment to experience our religion. The cost of this program will be in the advertising of it and the extra utilities usage. Provision of an organist could be costly, however, we might explore the use of students in turn for free practice time on our organ. Responsibility for this program would lie with the deacons and the minister.

Apartment Ministry

An apartment ministry needs to be researched to provide some way of reaching apartment residents with an introduction to our Church. This might include an explanation of the theological position of the Church, an outline of the various activities available and an invitation to worship with us.

Deacons and/or Deaconesses might initiate this emphasis. There would be a minor monetary cost to this program but it would take a good deal of time and effort. Major problem might be getting to know the managers of the apartments and getting their permission to call on the members. This might be achieved by getting to know a single resident and having them be our representative for that apartment building.

Research might include specific ways in which those dwelling in nearby apartments might have their spiritual life deepened.

This is one possibility of a place from which new members might be drawn.

Agreement on Church Goals

This program is to attain the agreement of the Church membership on spiritual and physical goals for the entire Church. The statement of purpose and goals are to be evaluated, modified if necessary, and accepted by the membership with a commitment to them. More specific goals as to the type of church, location and facility requirements must be addressed and decisions sought. Decisions on the type of church we desire will direct the answers to the other questions. Examples of what is meant by type of church may be:

1. Family church with large youth program and family activities,
2. Community church in Hollywood with programs oriented towards young and middle age couples and community organizations.
3. Social service church with social work programs to deal with misguided and less fortunate individuals from the area.

Combinations of the above and others must be considered.

This program is concerned with all the church goals. It is especially necessary for the continuance of the Church so that we can identify what we are trying to provide to others. This activity is continuing in nature in that as the environment changes, goals may have to change. The activity must begin immediately so that new members may be told what this church stands for.

No funds are required for this program, but large commitments for personal thought given to it by the members is necessary. Leadership might come from the Planning Committee. The measurable objectives of this program is the continuing presence of goals and a commitment to them by the members.

Increase Sunday School

There are indications of growth in the Sunday School department. It is the aim of the Board of Christian Education and the Church school staff to keep this momentum going forward.

The adult Bible class should be continued. It is the hope of some that the Bethel Bible Series may yet be initiated. Its record of success in many churches and the excellent material presented in the course make it

appealing. It also trains teachers in providing appropriate instruction.

There is an immediate need to have a Junior High School class begun on Sunday morning. Finding the staff for this class is a problem. Perhaps several couples would each take on one unit to teach for a month or six weeks at a time.

First Priority Programs Facilities

Termite Inspection

It is thought that there is considerable weakness in the buildings due to termites. There should be an investigation of these buildings to determine what needs to be repaired and how urgent it is. The crucial area is thought to be in Pilgrim Hall. The costs of correcting the problem must be identified. Leadership for this lies with the House and Grounds Committee.

Stained Glass Window Inspection

The stained glass windows in the sanctuary and Lash Chapel are a great inspiration and treasure. It has been noted that they are bulging and that some of the leading needs replacing. There should be an inspection of the windows by a reliable firm to determine what needs to be done to repair them and protect them against vandalism and catastrophe. Leadership for this lies with the House and Grounds Committee.

First Priority Programs Other

Deepen and Strengthen Spiritual Life

Sometimes, it seems like our Church is more of a social club, including cliques, than anything else. It is necessary to remind ourselves we all have a spiritual calling and spiritual goals are necessary to fulfill our mission. It is easy to see that a church school for the poor in Tijuana is a mission. We must see the same kind of calling and duties placed on us by virtue of our unique location on Hollywood Boulevard. Minister's idea of 15 minute Bible study is good before all business meetings. More retreats are necessary and some should span all age groups. Couples, Inc. could be a good source of inviting new people who later might become members.

Some specific programs successfully used in the past have been:

- . Workshops for the Deacons and Deaconesses
- . Conferences sponsored by religious organizations
- . Retreats with special people like Pastor Zikas from Athens, Greece
- . Small group meetings for book studies.

Continuance of these activities may be the objective of this program.

Study Feasibility of Changing the Fiscal Year

Having the Church fiscal year follow the calendar year results in the annual fundraising activity's falling in the Christmas season. At this time of year, money and time are at a premium. We might do well to at least experiment with a fiscal year ending June 30. An added advantage would be that officers, boards and committees would not be changing their personnel in mid-year. It might also be easier to get the necessary new officers and board members at this time of year.

Study Central Finance

The efficient administration of the Church's finances would be fostered by the adoption of a "Centralized Finance" system. In essence this means a single

church account for all receipts and disbursements, rather than having individual church organizations maintaining their individual accounts. The membership needs to be educated to the importance of this procedure, and significant steps have already been taken in this direction.

Study Changes in Fiscal Policy

The Board of Trustees has suggested a specific fiscal policy. All matters relating to this should be carefully studied and included in a policy or formula that could be applied to the saving and disbursement of church monies. The policy should deal with the handling, conservation and disbursement of capital funds. When Congregational approval is required must be addressed by the study.

Annual Budget for Choir Section Leaders

Our choir director feels that there is again an immediate need to hire section leaders for the soprano and tenor sections of our Chancel Choir. Salaries would be paid at \$50 per month for each leader on a 10 months basis for a total of \$1,000 for the year. This funding should be a part of the Annual Budget of our Church. The alto and bass sections are strong and no added funding is needed at the present time. The volunteer members of the choir depend upon these section leaders for guidance. Without these leaders it is feared that volunteer members may leave the choir.

Second Priority Programs

Replace Heaters

There are eleven or twelve unvented heaters in different parts of the sanctuary building that have been in use for over twenty-five years. They are no longer considered safe. It is estimated that it would take \$6,000 to replace them. Leadership for this project lies with the House and Grounds Committee.

Mens Club

The idea for reviving the Mens Club came from many. This club has been abandoned for at least six years. It used to be a huge success and cemented solidarity and common spiritual bonds among the men much as the Womens Association provides for the ladies. The idea now is that the February business meeting of the Deacons will be held in conjunction with a prayer breakfast. Later, this format will be expanded to invite all men interested to regular prayer breakfasts on early Sunday morning. Perhaps this could be done once a month during the church year. It is anticipated that guest speakers would be invited occasionally to stimulate spiritual growth. The revival of the Mens Club has met with enthusiasm from those to whom this idea has been discussed.

Bible Study at Board Meetings

Bible study at each board and committee meeting of our Church might add to the spiritual knowledge and perspective of the boards and committees. Rather than a short prayer at the beginning of each meeting, the minister would lead in the study of Scripture to deepen and broaden our knowledge of God's Word. These periods might be 10 - 15 minutes in length.

There would be no monetary cost to this program but the desire on the part of the members of the boards and committees to try this and an increase in the amount of preparation time necessary by the Minister for each meeting.

Ushers for Sunday Service

When our church used to have more members, there were enough men available so that rotating groups of four could serve only every third month. With declining membership, the same few men who arrive for service are pressed into duty. Some of these are not even properly elected

deacons. We have tried to enlarge the group of ushers by occasionally getting some of the high school and college age youth to serve. Senior Deacon has hopes of holding a meeting of willing new ushers to teach the fundamentals of greeting, taking collections, etc. but our pool of resources is limited. The idea of having Deaconesses sometimes serve as ushers has been suggested. For the most part, it has been rejected as not being traditional. It has been observed that most of us, including ushers, have not been very warm in our greeting of new members and visitors to our services. When service is over, we should be in the narthex extending warm greetings and being of help. We cannot expect the Minister to shoulder this burden alone. It is a good suggestion that greeters at the door serve full month at a time. This should provide more rapport with new people. Greeters should see that visitors should sign the register.

Study Location-Rebuild-Renovate Issues

A program to study the needs of the physical facility must be undertaken. The specific goals agreed upon in the next year and the projected size of the membership (based on the success of our membership program) must be evaluated in terms of physical facility needs. Issues involving the location, rebuilding and/or renovation of Church properties must be studied. The times when decisions must be made should be identified in the current year.

This program requires no funding itself, however the recommendations from it will have to identify funding requirements. The goal to provide a continuing environment is the goal commitment of this program. The total membership must provide input to the study under the leadership of the Planning Committee and the House and Grounds Committee.

Adjust Staff Salaries

This is a continual effort to increase salaries to keep them competitive. Keep a cost of living increase in the salaries of our staff - beyond regular merit increases. This is necessary to keep qualified help to provide services to the church.

Maintain Birthday List

A current and accurate list of members' birthdays should be maintained to avoid mistakes that have been made recently in announcing birthdays.

Third Priority Programs

Circle for Young Women

Expand Nursery School

Expanding the Nursery School to afternoon sessions could take place easily with little increase in equipment, time or money to the Church. This could be handled through existing organizational channels and may be indicated since we continue to have a fairly sizable waiting list. It would put us in touch with additional families who might be potential new members.

A continued emphasis on parent meetings and expansion of activity among parents of the Nursery School would be of benefit to them and to the Church. This might also include increased contact between members of the church and parents of children in the Nursery School.

Seminars and Workshops for Minister

A program to provide for the on-going training of our minister is important. As with any successful professional, discussing common problems and experiences with colleagues is a primary source for material to improve one's effectiveness. This program would provide for the attendance of seminars and workshops throughout the year with the approval of the Council. The minister would report back to the Council on the value of the meetings attended and summarize the content.

This is a continuing program, with the amount of activity dictated by the workload of the minister and the funds available. Though important to the minister's effectiveness and the representation of this church, care must be taken to assure that excessive time is not devoted to this program at the expense of other crucial activities.

List of Church Archives

The location of the Church archives and their content should be made available to the membership. This should be done under the leadership of the Church clerk.

Christian Parent Education

Parents in today's world are certainly seeking directions for guiding their children toward a rewarding childhood as well as guiding them to adulthood. This is an area where the church can certainly be a guiding light. Such a group was very helpful in the past and could even be of greater benefit in the future.

Christian parent education is an entire field on its own which could include such activities as weekend retreats for parents only during which they would focus on a) outside resource person talking about how to handle contemporary decisions in a Christian family, b) a book on personal devotional life - how to find time for it, how to share it with the family, etc., c) how to stay alive intellectually and up to date with your children, etc.

It could also include weekend camping experiences with entire families utilizing the Church minibus and including programs of activities, study and worship, campfire programs and vesper services for the entire family on the beach, mountains, or desert, etc.

The basic costs would be carried by the families but some cost break might be needed for some families.

These weekend retreats might be a potential way of reaching new families for our Church membership.

Fourth Priority Programs

Additional Staffing

As our membership increases in all age groups, we might consider acquiring additional staff such as counselors, spiritual resource teachers, and a youth minister. This program is not anticipated for the near future, but provides us with goals for the future.

Develop Library

A good church library is an important aid in educating Christians, in developing their spiritual growth, stimulating creativity, and building their influence in the community.

Leadership would be placed in the Christian Education Committee, which would act as a library committee concerned with policies, planning current activities, and future projects. The collection would serve children, parents, young people, and adults.

The staff should be volunteer and include a librarian. The location should be convenient for browsing. It is important for the quality of the collection that criteria for the selection of books and other media be established.

An active church library must acquire contemporary publications in the field of religion and related areas. It is vital that a specific allotment be included in the budget for a future year to provide for the purchase of new and recently published books and other media. The donation of books as memorials might be a part of the program of the library. A vigorous program to bring to the attention of potential users the possibilities for enrichment is very important.

Publish Choir Director's Music

It is the suggestion of the Music Department, that in the Annual Budget of our Church an amount be designated for the purpose of publishing and printing the composed music of our Choir Director. The Hollywood Congregational Church would receive publicity in the form of a picture or the like of our Church on the cover of the sheet music, and under the composer's name, the wording: Director of Music, Hollywood Congregational Church. This would add to our

Spiritual Growth, Continuing Environment, and certainly add to our influence in the community.

Publication of Historical Data

The Church Clerk might provide for publication in Pilgrim Chimes items from the history of the church; such as, what the church was doing 25 years ago, or 50 years ago.

Fifth Priority Programs

Full Day Nursery School

Full Day Care facilities are much more involved than half-day needs. This could be looked into and information gathered for future decision. It would make possible serving a vastly expanded number of working parents - especially of single parent-families, but would necessitate increased space on the first floor of the Sanctuary building.

Air Condition Kitchen and Electrical Work

There appears to be a need for larger electrical capacity in the kitchen. Air conditioning in this area would make it more pleasant for those who work so hard to prepare meals for the congregation.

Programs Currently Initiated

Parking Problem

Since the parking lot has been sold and the parking building has not been built, the future parking requirements of the church are threatened. As things are now, the Sunday and evening parking is not too serious, but the weekday parking is very inadequate. There is no certainty that we can continue indefinitely as we are. This area should be thoroughly investigated by the House and Grounds Committee.

Update Constitution

The Church Constitution has not been revised in any systematic way for 20 years. A committee is currently comparing an unofficial list of duties of the various officers, boards, and committees with the Constitution to see if there are any conflicts with or needs for authorization by the Constitution. Upon completion of the survey, the Constitution should be modified in accordance with the findings of the present committee.

Deacons Fund

The Deacons have proposed that \$200 be included in the proposed general budget of our church for 1975. None of this may be spent until it is actually raised by the Deacons. Ideas for fund raising to achieve this amount have already been set in motion by the Senior Deacon. The amount referred to above is in addition to the monies taken in from the two or three special collections annually received for disbursement as approved by the Deacons. Presuming \$200 will be raised by the Deacons, it will be put in the general treasury initially. However, any spending of that money will be at the direction only of the Deacons. At present, there is approximately \$36 in the fund. It is understood that if our fund raising drive exceeds \$200 the excess will be used in general treasury as trustees see fit.

Full Time Custodian

A full time custodian is a primary need in this church. The cost will be a salary at a reasonable level. The members feel a definite need to have custodial help available when preparing for meetings and at the conclusion of meetings. The Church Mouse has certainly increased the

need for this position. The program has been initiated on a trial basis.

Missions and the Community

Missions need to become more obvious to our members through educational materials published on a regular basis plus encouraging members to visit our missions whenever possible. Emphasis on spreading the Good News of God's message of love here in our own community might lead us to include missionary ventures here in Hollywood, not just in other countries. Helping to sponsor the showing of Christmas Films in our Chapel on weekends might be one example of a home mission project.

Bell Choir

A new church music program is being worked on at the present time known as the "Bell Choir". Participants in this choir will be provided by our church members and friends. Presently 25 bells have been purchased and rehearsals have begun. In the future more bells, music, and accessories will be purchased. We feel that this is a part of our Caring Fellowship, continuing environment and will be an influence in the community.

Landscape Patio

H.C.C. PLANNING COMMITTEE

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